



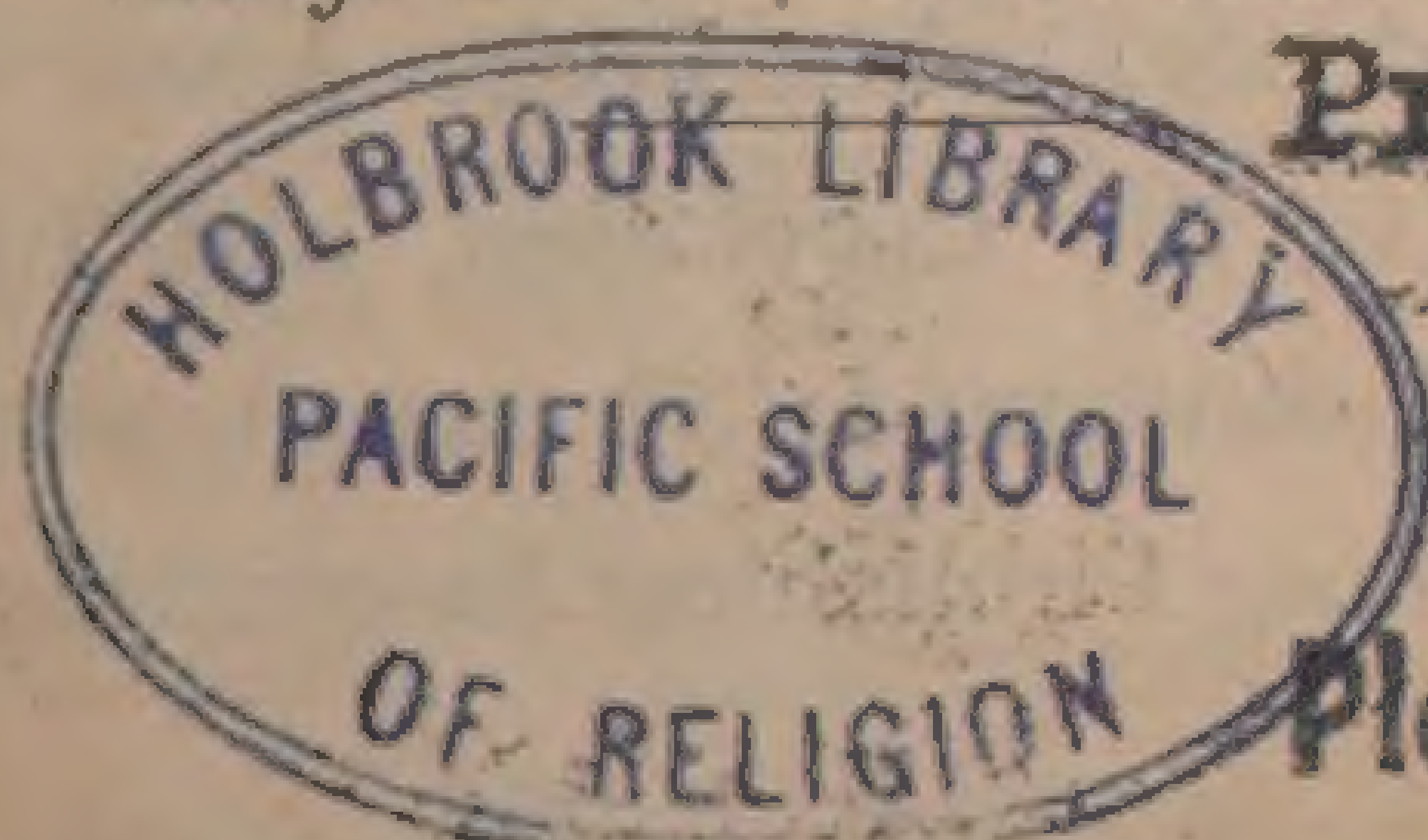
THE QUESTION:

*“WHAT ARE THE
DOCTRINES OF
THE NEW CHURCH?”*

ANSWERED

BY
Benjamin
B. F. BARRETT.

*“And He that sat upon the throne said : Behold, I make all
things new.”—REV. XXI. 5.*



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OF THE SCRIPTURES.


BY

REV. EDWARD MADELEY.

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THE SWEDENBORG PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION.

1883.

INVITATION TO THE CLERGY OF AMERICA.

In the following work, written by the late Rev. B. F. Barrett, you will find the doctrines of the New Christian Church clearly presented in few words in contrast with the doctrines which prevailed in the Christian world a century and a half ago, some of which still linger in the creeds of prevailing Churches. The day has come when we are told that the inhabitants of our earth are to be led in freedom according to reason, and not blindly.

The clergyman who may receive a copy of this pamphlet is kindly invited to read it carefully and judge for himself which are the most consistent, rational, and in accordance with the sacred Scriptures, the doctrines which prevailed at the middle of the last century or the doctrines of the New Church or New Jerusalem briefly presented in the following pages.

It is in no sectarian spirit that this pamphlet is sent to the clergy, for the "New Church" is not a new Church organization or sect, but a new dispensation of Divine Truth now descending from God out of Heaven and gradually enlightening all Churches and the whole earth. All who sincerely believe on our Lord Jesus Christ and are honestly striving to keep the Divine Commandments, in intention, thought, word, and deed, shunning all evils as sins against God, are members of this New Church, wherever or in whatever Church organization they may be found, for we are told by the illuminated seer of the New Dispensation that

"The good of life according to one's religion contains within it the affection of knowing truths, which such persons also learn and receive when they come into the other life" (A. C. 455). Which we can see to be reasonable.

Again, we are told that "Evils which belong to the will are what condemn a man and sink him down to hell; and falsities only so far as they become conjoined with evils; then one follows the other. This is proved by numerous instances of persons who are in falsities, and yet are saved" (A. C. 845).

"In the spiritual world to which every man goes after death, it is not the character of your faith nor of your doctrine into which inquiry is made, but the quality of your life" (D. P. 101).

It was apparently the opinion of Swedenborg that his writings would be read by the clergy, who would teach the doctrines therein contained to their congregations, and thus the glorious truths for

this new era or crowning Church would be spread among the people; for, in speaking of the descent of the New Church or New Jerusalem from God out of Heaven, he says it can only take place

“In proportion as the falses of the former Church are removed, for what is new cannot gain admission where falses have before been implanted, unless those falses are first rooted out, and this must first take place among the clergy, and by their means among the laity” (T. C. R. 784).

We are told by Swedenborg that the angels rejoiced greatly that it had pleased the Lord to reveal a knowledge of correspondences so deeply concealed during some thousands of years.

“And they said it was done in order that the Christian Church, which is founded on the Word, and is now at its end, may again revive and draw breath through Heaven from the Lord” (C. L. 532).

It is with no desire to tear down existing Church organizations, or to separate the clergy or laity from such organizations, that this pamphlet is circulated; rather we would say, let the readers of this work, and of the writings of Swedenborg, who begin to behold the dawning light of the New Church, the Crown of all Churches, stand, if practicable, in the place where they providentially find themselves, and let their light shine, and strive to lead their brethren and sisters, gently, as the Lord has led them, into the light of the New Jerusalem, and thus the Christian Church may and will “revive again and draw breath from the Lord through Heaven.”

In reading the following pages please remember that all doctrines are to be drawn from the literal sense of the sacred Scriptures, and clearly taught therein, nor are we to disregard the light of nature, for Swedenborg, in giving the internal or spiritual sense of the Apocalypse, says:—

“‘And she brought forth a male child,’ signifies the doctrine of the New Church; ‘who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron,’ which signifies, by truths from the literal sense of the Word, and, at the same time, by rational arguments drawn from the light of nature, will convince all who are in dead worship through being principled in faith separated from charity, that are willing to be convinced” (A. R. 543, 544).

Again, we are told that

“All Church doctrine which does not accord with the Word, is not sound, but labors under a deadly disease; for from the Word, or sacred Scriptures, and from no other source, the doctrine of the Church is to be derived” (A. R. 576).

And again,

“ Since in the New Church this tenet is rejected, that the understanding is to be kept in subjection to faith, and in the place of it, it is a received maxim that the truth of the Church should be seen, in order that it may be believed, no. 224 ; and since truth cannot be seen otherwise than rationally, therefore it is said, from truths rationally understood. How can any man be led by the Lord, and conjoined with Heaven, who shuts up his understanding against such things as relate to salvation and eternal life? Is it not the understanding which requires to be illuminated and instructed? And what is the understanding closed by religion but thick darkness, and such darkness, too, as rejects from itself the light that would illuminate? Again, who can acknowledge truth and retain it, unless he sees it?” (A. R. 564).

The essentials of the Church of the future are few and easily comprehended. Repeatedly in the Apocalypse Revealed Swedenborg tells us what they are, as in the following passages :—

“ *And the temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant*, signifies the new Heaven, in which the Lord in his Divine Humanity is worshiped ; and where they live according to the commandments of the Decalogue, which are the two essentials of the New Church, by which comes conjunction ” (A. R. 629).

And again :—

“ *And I will give unto my two witnesses*, signifies those who confess and acknowledge in their hearts that the Lord is the God of heaven and earth, and that his Humanity is Divine, and who are conjoined to Him by a life according to the precepts of the Decalogue. The reason why such persons are here understood by the two witnesses, is, because these two things constitute the two essentials of the New Church ” (A. R. 490).

Now, clergymen of every denomination, if you have not already obtained them, we kindly entreat you to send for the Gift Books noticed on the second page of the cover of this pamphlet, and when you have read them carefully, send for the Arcana Cœlestia and other works of Swedenborg, and read them, and you will never regret having done so, for they will open up to you a new world of thought, light, and life, and enable you to meet the skepticism, agnosticism, and spiritualism of this day intelligently and rationally, as you can never do without the knowledge contained therein. Thousands of clergymen, as you will see, have obtained the Gift Books, and many of them we know have read them with the greatest delight. Why should not all of you do the same ?

The Lord in the gospels and in the book of Revelation promised to come a second time, and to come in the clouds of heaven, not of the earth. Why was this Second Coming necessary? Because Babylon the Great, or the Love of Spiritual Dominion or rule, without regard to use, and the Dragon, or the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, teaching men that they could reach Heaven without obedience to the Divine Commandments, or the traditions and doctrines of men, have made the Word of God of none effect, and have desolated the Christian world and flooded it with evils untold. A new day is dawning, and all things are to be made new, and there shall be but one God, and his name one in all the earth.

Will the Church of the Future be one Church securely founded on the Word of the Lord and united in the bonds of Charity, tolerating diversity of views on non-essential points, or will it, as in the past, consist of warring sects based upon the doctrines and traditions of men?

Will all men be in freedom to "search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life," and "prove all things and hold fast that which is good," or, as too frequently has been the case in the past, will the understanding be held under subjection to faith, and the members of Churches believe nothing but what is contained in creeds and taught by ecclesiastical leaders? What think ye?

In the *Mirror of Truth* an intelligent writer says:—

"The science of correspondences opens up to me such a new mode of thought and interpretation of the Bible and nature, that both take upon themselves a new meaning and sublimity. And as I come more and more into the understanding of this fundamental science or law, I can truly say it seems I am in an entirely new world. The language of Scripture no longer seems exaggerated as it once did, where it says 'the mountains skipped,' 'the trees shall clap their hands,' for these are truly expressions of definite spiritual experiences. Then again, through a knowledge of this science of sciences, the unseen world draws nearer, it ceases to be a dream, it becomes a living and ever present reality in which from the Lord we 'live and move and have our being.'"

On page 2 the reader will see where and how he can obtain Rev. E. Madeley's "Science of Correspondences Elucidated," an excellent work; also, as in the case of the Gift Books, in the good providence of the Lord furnished to all clergymen without money and without price, clergymen having simply to call and get them, or send stamps for the postage to get them.

PREFACE.

The need of some popular exposition of the Doctrines of the New Church, neither voluminous nor expensive, and adapted to the capacity of the average reader, has long been felt, and the desire for such a work has been often expressed.

To supply this need, has been the author's main purpose in the preparation of the present volume. The questions are often asked, What does the New Church believe and teach? and wherein do its doctrines differ from those of other churches? This little work will be found to contain true and intelligible answers to these inquiries.

The expositions have, for the most part, been necessarily brief; but the reader who may wish to pursue the inquiry is repeatedly referred to other works, wherein the same subjects are treated more extensively, and with rational and Scriptural evidence of what is believed to be the truth of the New Church views herein presented.

For the purpose of showing the need of some such new revelation as that claimed to have been made through Swedenborg, the author has taken occasion to contrast the Old with the New view on many subjects; but in doing this, he has been careful to present the view which was generally accepted in Swedenborg's day,—well knowing that the Old Theology has, in many respects, been considerably modified by the quiet but constantly pervading influence of the New; so that many of the New views are now held by the most advanced Christians in nearly all the churches, often without a suspicion of the fact that they are New.

And that the reader might have no doubt that he is here presented with the veritable New Church doctrine on each of the subjects discussed, the author has frequently supplemented his own expositions, with brief and confirmatory extracts from Swedenborg.

B. F. B.

GERMANTOWN, PA.,
August, 1883.

CONTENTS.

| CHAP. | PAGE |
|---|------|
| I.— <i>INTRODUCTION</i> , | 11 |
| WHY CALLED “HEAVENLY DOCTRINES,” | 12 |
| A HUMAN INSTRUMENT NECESSARY, | 12 |
| II.— <i>THE CENTRAL DOCTRINE</i> , | 13 |
| PREVALENT BELIEFS PRIOR TO 1757, | 15 |
| THE CHARACTER OF GOD AS REVEALED FOR THE NEW CHURCH, | 16 |
| THE DIVINE PERSONALITY, | 18 |
| THE NEW DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY, | 23 |
| THE INCARNATION OF THE DIVINE, | 25 |
| SOME SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY, | 25 |
| NEED OF THE DIVINE INCARNATION, | 27 |
| GOD ACCOMMODATED TO OUR NEEDS, | 30 |
| SUBJECTED TO HUMAN CONDITIONS, | 31 |
| HUMANITY GLORIFIED, | 32 |
| A NEW SPIRITUAL FORCE MANIFEST, | 33 |
| GOD IN CHRIST, | 34 |
| III.— <i>THE ATONEMENT</i> , | 36 |
| THE NEW DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT, | 38 |
| ITS IMPORTANCE PRACTICALLY VIEWED, | 41 |
| IV.— <i>SIN: ITS NATURE</i> , | 42 |
| V.— <i>REMISSION OF SINS</i> , | 43 |
| VI.— <i>REDEMPTION</i> , | 44 |
| THE NEW DOCTRINE, | 46 |
| VII.— <i>SALVATION</i> , | 50 |
| VIII.— <i>THE DOCTRINE OF THE CROSS</i> , | 52 |
| THE NEW DOCTRINE ON THIS SUBJECT, | 52 |
| IX.— <i>THE BLOOD OF CHRIST</i> , | 54 |
| X.—“ <i>THE END OF THE WORLD</i> ,” | 56 |
| XI.— <i>THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD</i> , | 59 |
| THE NEW DOCTRINE ON THIS SUBJECT, | 61 |

| CHAP. | PAGE |
|--|------|
| XII.— <i>THE SACRED SCRIPTURE</i> , | 65 |
| <i>THE KEY FOR OPENING THE SCRIPTURES</i> , | 68 |
| <i>ILLUSTRATIONS AND CONFIRMATIONS</i> , | 69 |
| XIII.— <i>APPARENT AND REAL TRUTHS OF SCRIPTURE</i> , | 70 |
| XIV.— <i>RELIGION</i> , | 72 |
| <i>THE ESSENTIAL THING IN RELIGION</i> , | 74 |
| <i>REASON IN RELIGION</i> , | 76 |
| <i>RELIGION WITHOUT ASCETICISM</i> , | 77 |
| XV.— <i>FREE-WILL</i> , | 79 |
| XVI.— <i>REPENTANCE</i> , | 81 |
| XVII.— <i>REGENERATION</i> , | 83 |
| <i>THE NEW-CHURCH DOCTRINE</i> , | 84 |
| <i>THIS DOCTRINE ILLUSTRATED</i> , | 85 |
| XVIII.— <i>CHARITY, FAITH AND WORKS</i> , | 88 |
| <i>THE OLD DOCTRINE</i> , | 89 |
| <i>THE NEW-CHURCH DOCTRINE</i> , | 89 |
| XIX.— <i>BELIEVING IN GOD</i> , | 91 |
| XX.— <i>SEEING AND KNOWING GOD</i> , | 92 |
| XXI.— <i>WHAT IS IT TO LOVE GOD?</i> | 94 |
| XXII.— <i>PRAYER</i> , | 95 |
| <i>THE HIGHEST KIND OF WORSHIP</i> , | 99 |
| XXIII.— <i>DIVINE PROVIDENCE</i> , | 100 |
| XXIV.— <i>FREEDOM</i> , | 102 |
| XXV.— <i>CATHOLICITY</i> , | 103 |
| XXVI.— <i>SPIRITUAL SPHERES</i> , | 106 |
| XXVII.— <i>MARRIAGE AND THE SEXES</i> , | 109 |
| XXVIII.— <i>THE RESURRECTION</i> , | 113 |
| <i>THE NEW DOCTRINE</i> , | 114 |
| XXIX.— <i>THE FIRST STATE AFTER DEATH</i> , | 116 |
| XXX.— <i>SPIRIT-SEEING—ITS PHILOSOPHY OR RATIONALE BRIEFLY EXPLAINED</i> , | 118 |
| XXXI.— <i>CONCERNING HEAVEN</i> , | 121 |
| <i>THE NEED OF SWEDENBORG'S DISCLOSURES</i> , | 121 |
| <i>DISCREDITED :—BUT BY WHOM?</i> | 122 |
| <i>THE NEW DOCTRINE CONCERNING HEAVEN</i> , | 124 |
| <i>CHARACTER OF THE HEAVENLY INHABITANTS</i> , | 125 |
| <i>DISTRIBUTED INTO SOCIETIES</i> , | 126 |
| <i>TIME AND SPACE IN HEAVEN</i> , | 127 |
| <i>THE LIGHT AND HEAT OF HEAVEN</i> , | 129 |
| <i>CHANGES OF STATE IN HEAVEN</i> , | 130 |

| CHAP. | PAGE |
|---|------|
| THE APPEARANCE, GARMENTS, HABITATIONS, AND OTHER SURROUNDINGS OF THE ANGELS, . | 130 |
| GOVERNMENT AND WORSHIP IN HEAVEN, . . . | 132 |
| CHILDREN IN HEAVEN, | 133 |
| A HEAVEN FOR THE HEATHEN, | 136 |
| HOW ARE THE DENIZENS OF HEAVEN OCCUPIED? | 138 |
| THE HAPPINESS OF HEAVEN, | 139 |
| XXXII.—CONCERNING HELL, | 140 |
| THE NEW DOCTRINE, | 141 |
| XXXIII.—CONNECTION OF THE TWO WORLDS, | 143 |

ABBREVIATIONS

OF THE WORKS OF SWEDENBORG QUOTED IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES.

| | |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| A. C. | stand for Arcana Coelestia. |
| D. P. | “ “ Divine Providence. |
| T. C. R. | “ “ True Christian Religion. |
| D. S. S. | “ “ Doctrine of Sacred Scripture. |
| H. H. | “ “ Heaven and Hell. |
| A. R. | “ “ Apocalypse Revealed. |
| Ap. Ex. | “ “ Apocalypse Explained. |
| D. F. | “ “ Doctrine of Faith. |
| N. J. D. | “ “ Doctrines of the New Jerusalem. |
| C. L. | “ “ Conjugial Love. |
| Contin. L. J. | “ “ Continuation of Last Judgment. |

THE
DOCTRINES OF THE NEW CHURCH
BRIEFLY EXPLAINED.

I.—*INTRODUCTION.*

By the New Church, as the term is here employed, is to be understood that Church signified and foreshadowed by the Holy City, New Jerusalem, which the apostle John beheld in vision “coming down from God out of heaven.” (Rev. xxi. 2.) The doctrines of this Church were given to the world in a printed form more than a hundred years ago. Yet not one in fifty among intelligent Christians of the present day, knows what these doctrines are. The majority of people have heard something about them, and naturally suppose that what they have heard is correct; but they will generally find, on careful inquiry, that what they have heard is very far from the truth. Many honest and well-disposed persons ridicule these doctrines, who know little or nothing of them beyond what they have learned from persons no better informed than themselves. It is not, therefore, the doctrines of the New Church which excite their ridicule, but that grotesque caricature of them which they have received from others who have never taken pains to examine them, and therefore know not whereof they affirm.

Let it be said, here at the outset, that these doctrines are all contained in the Sacred Scripture, however the carnal mind may fail to see them there. They are taught in that higher sense of Scripture which is above the natural man’s discerning; for “the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are

spiritually discerned.” (1 Cor. ii. 13.) But they are clearly discernible by the spiritually-minded and unprejudiced, and their truth may be confirmed even by the letter of Scripture.

Why called “Heavenly Doctrines” ?

They are called “heavenly doctrines,” because they are believed and taught in heaven, and are sure to conduct to heaven all those who receive and live according to them. And since they are all contained in the heavenly sense of the Divine Word, and are that sense brought down or laid open to rational comprehension, therefore they are regarded by those who accept them, as a New Dispensation of religious truth, and are believed to be what is meant, according to the true spiritual interpretation of the apostle’s vision, by “the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven.” For a city, spiritually interpreted, denotes a church in respect to its doctrine ; and “the holy city, New Jerusalem,” denotes that new and august system of doctrinal theology now revealed, whereby a New Christian Church is to be built up, or a new and heavenlier state of mind produced among the various churches and peoples on earth. This city was seen “coming down from God out of heaven,” and thereby was represented, symbolically, the truth, that this new doctrinal system is not a mere human invention, but that it comes from the Lord out of heaven ;—that it is such doctrine as is believed in heaven, and such as accords with all pure, exalted and heavenly states of mind, and actually comes down from the heavenly sense of the Sacred Scripture.

These doctrines therefore claim to be a new revelation,—not a revelation to supersede the written Word, but to help us rightly to understand the Word ; to unfold for us its deeper and true meaning, by means of which a purer and more heavenly state of life may be attained.

A Human Instrument Necessary.

For this purpose a human instrument was needed ; and such an instrument was provided in the person of Emanuel Swedenborg. This man, it is believed, was providentially raised up and prepared for his sublime mission, which was to lay open the spiritual meaning of God’s written Word, and to reveal at the same time the grand realities of the spiritual world—the state of man after death, the time and manner of the last judgment, and the real nature of heaven and hell. He was not *inspired* as were those who wrote the Word,

but he was *illuminated* in an extraordinary degree. He was gifted with extraordinary spiritual insight. His spiritual senses (such is the claim) were opened, so that he was enabled to see and converse with spirits and angels as man with man, and to describe with accuracy and minuteness the condition of things in the spiritual world. At the same time his understanding was so illuminated that he could discern the spiritual meaning of all he saw, as well as of all that is written in the Divine Word.

But Swedenborg's writings are to be regarded merely as *human* compositions. They are not, and do not claim to be, divinely *inspired*; for they are not written like the Sacred Scripture according to correspondences, and have no internal sense. They only claim to be a divinely-authorized exposition of the spiritual sense of Scripture, and a truthful disclosure of the facts, phenomena and laws of the spiritual world. And his teachings are to be accepted only so far as they commend themselves to one's rational intuitions; or so far as they seem to us reasonable and true, and in accordance with the revealed character, laws and will of God.

We proceed, now, to give a brief statement and explanation of the doctrines of the New Church, without attempting to prove them true. Our space will not admit of that. We ask the reader to give them a candid consideration;—to examine them in the light of Scripture and reason and human experience and the accepted laws of our mental and moral constitutions, and of all that the best minds know or believe of the character of God and his government of the moral universe.

II.—THE CENTRAL DOCTRINE.

The Central Doctrine in every theological system must needs be that concerning the proper Object of religious worship. This doctrine, whatever be its nature, will determine the character of the whole system. All subordinate doctrines are the legitimate offspring of this, and are modified, shaped and colored by it, as surely as the earths in our solar system are warmed, enlightened, electrified and held in their orbits by the central luminary which gave them birth, and around which they all revolve.

When, therefore, we have learned what any system of theology teaches concerning the supreme Object of worship, we have mastered the central doctrine of that system; and from this we may

draw a pretty just conclusion in regard to all the rest. For when the central doctrine is wrong, the others growing out of it, adjusted to it, modified and colored by it, cannot be right; and when this is right, the others cannot be very far wrong.

Besides, the doctrine concerning the proper Object of religious worship is intensely *practical*. It exerts a mightier influence on the character of the believer than any other doctrine. We cannot escape its plastic power. We cannot help becoming conformed, in some measure at least, to the character of Him whom we worship, or rather to our *conception* and *cherished idea* of his character. Our souls are gradually and unconsciously moulded into the likeness of our cherished ideal. If partiality, self-seeking, arbitrariness or vindictiveness enter into our conception of the Divine character, our own character will inevitably be affected by such conception. If we think of God as stern, haughty, selfish and tyrannical, we cannot fail to make these characteristics our own. If we think of Him as acting from a selfish love of glory, we shall feel that we must closely resemble Him when we are acting from a similar love; and so the love of glory will become the ruling principle in us. But if, on the contrary, we conceive the Object of our adoration to be noble, generous and unselfish in his nature, then shall we, through the plastic power of such conception, grow to be noble, generous and unselfish in ours. If we conceive Him to be supremely tender, compassionate, wise and good—supremely patient, loving and forgiving—then will these same graces gradually become more and more our own.

Common observation and universal experience justify these conclusions. We are naturally inclined to imitate those to whom we look up with a feeling of respect and veneration. We fall unconsciously into their habits of thought, feeling, speech, and action. We adopt their sentiments; we assume their tones; we imitate their manners; we often copy their follies and weaknesses—sometimes even their vices. The love and veneration we feel for them blind us to their faults and foibles, or give to these an air of comeliness, and create in us a desire to be like them; and this desire is perpetually stimulating our growth in that direction.

Now since the tendency of all worship is to bring the soul of the worshiper into sympathy with and likeness to the Being, or his *conception* of the Being, worshiped, therefore it is of primary importance that we have a correct idea of that Being's character. No other idea exerts so tremendous an influence on our own character,

as the idea we habitually cherish of the supreme Object of worship. People do not, as many imagine, worship the same Being merely because they *call* Him by the same name. In reality each one worships the God that he inwardly looks up to or *thinks of*. A thousand persons may agree in calling the Object of their worship Jehovah, God or Lord ; yet their conceptions of his *character* may differ so widely, that it may with truth be said that each of them worships a different God. The same name may be, to each of these different minds, the sign of widely different qualities ; for the kind of God one *thinks of*, is the kind he worships.

It becomes, then, a matter of supreme moment what idea we form and habitually cherish of the Divine Being or his character. If our thought on this central doctrine is wrong, it can hardly be right on any subordinate ones. As the navigator on the pathless ocean determines his geographical position by an observation of the sun, so does each one's intellectual apprehension or moral observation of God determine his spiritual *status*.

Prevalent Beliefs prior to 1757.

Now, if we go back to the year 1757, and inquire into the then prevalent beliefs of Christendom, we shall find that every just conception of the character of God was well-nigh blotted out. We shall find that the generally accepted theology of that day made the Supreme Being partial, unjust, selfish and vindictive. And we shall find, too, that this false conception of the Divine character was faithfully reflected in the creeds and the general character of professed believers. We shall find that the Christian nations and churches of that day were animated by the same partial, unjust, selfish and vindictive spirit which the generally accepted theology imputed to the Divine Being. Christendom was immersed in very thick darkness. There was a general and deep eclipse of faith, and the charity for which the primitive Christians were distinguished, had quite departed from the church. And along with the extinction of true charity and a living faith and a just conception of the Divine character, all knowledge of man's higher life and the way to its attainment, as well as of the nature and reality of heaven and hell and all things spiritual, had well-nigh perished. And thus was fulfilled, in its spiritual sense, that Divine prediction : " The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven."

This (according to the belief and teachings of the New Church) was “the consummation of the age” foretold in the Gospels,—the end of the first Christian Dispensation or Church. This was the day which the Lord foresaw and foretold, when “the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet,” would be seen “standing in the holy place;” the day when “false Christs and false prophets” (fundamental and congenital false religious doctrines) should arise, deceiving, “if it were possible, even the elect.”

And is it strange that, at such a juncture, a wise and loving Father should have vouchsafed to men a further revelation of Himself and the things of his kingdom? It would have been far more strange if He had *not*. Especially as the same inspired prophecy which proclaims the great darkness that was to fall upon the church, foretells also a glorious illumination that was to follow—another coming of the Lord himself “with power and great glory.” And this second coming of the Son of Man, we observe, was to be “in the clouds of heaven;” which, in the symbolic language of Scripture, means a coming or revealing of Himself in the heavenly sense of the Word, through the obscurity or cloud of the letter.

And at the hour of the church’s great darkness and the world’s great need, a new revelation (such is the belief and teaching of the New Church) *was* vouchsafed—the very thing to have been expected when we consider the paternal character of God—his deep concern and tender care and boundless love for the children of men.

The Character of God as Revealed for the New Church.

And what is the character of the Heavenly Father as disclosed in this new revelation? To answer this question briefly, it is :

That He is a Being of infinite wisdom, tenderness, mercy and love. All that is highest, purest, noblest and loveliest in human character is from Him, and exists in Him in a measureless degree. He not only loves, but is Love itself; and this is Life itself. Love is his very substance and *esse*. All the love there is in heaven and on earth is from Him, as all life is from Him. And his love is infinite in all its attributes; infinite in its sweetness, its purity, its amplitude, its power. We can form but a faint conception of God’s love, because we can receive or experience it only in a feeble degree. The love of a wife for her husband, of a mother for her child, of a lover for his betrothed, is, in respect to its sweetness, tenderness and unselfishness, a faint image of the Divine Love; but in a point of intensity,

amplitude and power, it is as the feeble glimmer of the fire-fly compared with the splendor of the noon-day sun.

God's love, too, is altogether unselfish in its nature. It is the love of others out of itself. It is infinitely expansive, diffusive, communicative. Its ceaseless desire is to impart itself and its delights to others. Such is the unchangeable nature of true love; for it all comes from God. It never seeks its own, never thinks of itself. Its glory and its delight is to communicate itself with all its joys, without a thought of recompense. In doing good and blessing others, it finds its abundant reward. And of this it never wearies any more than the sun wearies of imparting light and heat to revolving worlds.

It was from the love of imparting his own life, and so making other creatures happy, that God created man to be an image of Himself and a finite receptacle of his love. For the great end in creation was a heaven of angels from the human race;—a host of intelligent and rational beings, bright and joyous, and forever growing brighter and more joyous, in the reception and exercise of the Creator's love. And this beneficent end He has pursued with infinite wisdom and undiminished ardor from the beginning until now. He has followed our race through all its wanderings; followed it with his patient, yearning, pitying love; followed it with outstretched arms of mercy into thickest darkness and lowest depths of degradation and sin; followed it with remonstrance and warning and rebuke and correction and instruction and tender entreaty, yet never infringing man's proper freedom, but forever guarding that as the apple of his eye.

And the same deep, tender, patient love which has pursued our race through ages past, pursues it still;—pursues peoples and states and individuals from hour to hour. Nothing can turn it from this pursuit. Nothing can alienate it. Nothing can quench or diminish its ardor. We may be deaf to its remonstrances; we may despise its warnings; we may mock at its counsels; we may be heedless of its chastenings; we may trample on its laws; we may even crucify that love again and again in our hearts; yet for all this and spite of this, it patiently waits the hour when it may rise from its tomb and make its gentle pleadings heard.

Yes: God loves and cares for us, says the New Theology, even when we forget and turn away from Him. He loves and cares for us in our follies and our sins. With pitying eye and outstretched arms and ceaseless longing to save and bless, He pursues the vilest of

his rational creatures ; pursues them into the lowest haunts of degradation and vice ; goes down with tender yearning to the most sinful and abandoned—yes, down to the very lowest of the hells,—and, veiling his ineffable brightness in merciful accommodation to their states, forever strives to save them from a lower depth, and to promote their greatest comfort and best welfare.

Such is the nature of God's love—forever seeking the highest good even of those who are enemies to Him by wicked works. Nor is his love a mere blind impulse. It is infinitely wise. It is united with supreme intelligence as the sun's heat is united with light. It therefore knows what is best for every human being ; knows how to bring good out of evil, light out of darkness, joy out of sorrow, success out of disaster, and ultimate triumph out of temporary defeat. Infinite love permits nothing to befall us which infinite wisdom cannot in the end convert into a blessing. The sternest discipline of life, its most wearying vexations, its sorest disappointments, its hardest trials, its bitterest griefs—they are all permitted and overruled for our own or others' ultimate good. No cup of sorrow is proffered to our lips, but the hand of Infinite Love is there, ready and eager to make the bitter draught contribute to the best welfare of our own or others' souls.

Such, briefly, is God's character as disclosed in the revelations made for the New Church. Very different is it from that proclaimed from the pulpits, depicted in the creeds and reflected in the life and conduct of Christendom a hundred years ago. We see in it all that is worthy the supreme homage of men on earth and angels in heaven ; not a shadow of imperfection—nothing but purest, sweetest, tenderest love, and this forever guided in its operations by infinite wisdom.

We shall not attempt to *prove* that the character of the Heavenly Father is such as is here delineated. There is no need of that. It is written on every page of the created universe ; written in the experience, constitution and moral government of our race ; seen everywhere in the Volume of inspiration also, when its true spiritual meaning is fully apprehended.

The Divine Personality.

The next question, scarcely inferior to that of the *Divine Character* in its practical importance, is that of the *Divine Personality*. Does God exist as a Divine Person, or only as a formless and

universally diffused essence? And is He to be thought of and adored as *one* Person, or more than one? And has He ever revealed Himself personally to his intelligent creatures? Swedenborg has given a distinct answer to each of these questions.

It was the accepted belief of Christendom a hundred years ago, that there are *three* Divine Persons existent in and constituent of the one God. And a different character was ascribed and a different office assigned to each of these Persons. And this tripersonalism entered into the whole system of the then reigning theology. It moulded the entire faith of the church into strict conformity with itself. It shaped and colored all its doctrines. The accepted “scheme of redemption,” or “plan of salvation,” grew by strict logical sequence out of the tripersonal theory. The same may be said of the doctrine of “vicarious atonement,” the most important factor in this “scheme.” And the mental confusion and distraction produced by this theory, have been frankly confessed by competent witnesses; and the angry controversies to which it has given rise, constitute no mean part of ecclesiastical history. One of the profoundest thinkers on Theology that our country has produced, as well as one of the noblest and saintliest of men—himself a prominent and esteemed minister in an orthodox church—writing upon this subject some thirty years ago, said :

“Our properly orthodox teachers and churches, while professing three persons, also retain the verbal profession of one person. They suppose themselves really to hold that God is one person. And yet they most certainly do not; they only confuse their understanding, and call their confusion faith. This, I affirm, not as speaking reproachfully, but, as I suppose, on the ground of sufficient evidence—partly because it cannot be otherwise, and partly because it visibly is not.

“No man can assert three persons, meaning three consciousnesses, wills, and understandings, and still have any intelligent meaning in his mind, when he asserts that they are yet one person. . . .

“There are too many signs of the mental confusion I speak of, not to believe that it exists. Thus if the class I speak of were to hear a discourse insisting on the proper personal unity of God, it would awaken suspicion in their minds: while a discourse insisting on the existence of three persons, would be only a certain proof of orthodoxy; showing that they profess three persons, meaning what they profess, and one person, really not meaning it.”

The same distinguished writer further remarks, and in a similar vein :

“Meantime, and especially in the former class of those who range themselves under this metaphysical tripersonality, mournful evidence will be found that a confused and painfully bewildered state is often produced by it. They are practically at work in their thoughts, to choose between the three; sometimes actually and decidedly preferring one to another; doubting how to adjust their minds in worship; uncertain, often, which of the three to obey; turning away, possibly, from one in a feeling of dread that might well be called aversion; devoting themselves to another as the Romanist to his patron saint. This, in fact, is polytheism, and not the clear, simple love of God. There is true love in it, doubtless, but the comfort of love is not here. The mind is involved in a dismal confusion which we cannot think of without the sincerest pity. No soul can truly rest in God, when God is two or three, and these in such a sense that a choice between them must be continually suggested.”—*Bushnell's “God in Christ,”* pp. 131-4.

This, from a man of profound thought, reverent feeling, close observation, deep experience and rare candor; and one whose long and extensive acquaintance among the churches professing the tripersonal doctrine, enabled him to speak with confidence on the subject. And more recent writers of the orthodox school, have borne similar testimony—some of them not hesitating to characterize tripersonalism as *tritheism*. Thus a correspondent of the *Christian Union*, as late as December, 1880, writes to that paper:

“A little boy friend of mine spoke recently of ‘the Jesus-God, and the other one.’ I am aware of a similar confusion of thought. How can I avoid it? How can I learn to think of Jesus as God, without a feeling that there is another, ‘the high and mighty Ruler of the universe’? I feel that I lose much that I might have of comfort and rest and joy in prayer and companionship with God, if I were not thus confused. Some find an easy way out of the difficulty by rejecting the divinity of Christ. What can I do, who desire to worship Christ as God?”

And in their reply to this inquiry, the thoughtful and accomplished editors of that paper say:

“Of all errors the most dangerous are those which pervade the community like malaria in the air; arising no one can tell when or where; pervading all teaching, though avowed in none. Such is the error of Tritheism, the doctrine that there are three Gods. No one teaches it, but most Christians believe it. It is universally denied, and generally accepted; denied in the creeds, accepted in the experience. God the Father is conceived as Judge, majestic, awful, stern, inexorable; the embodiment of law and justice. Christ is conceived as Friend, meek, loving, tender, pitying; the

embodiment of a tender compassion. The Holy Spirit is conceived as an Effluence, impalpable, invisible, ineffable; a Shadow cast by God, which eludes all grasp. . . . Does not this fairly describe the commonest thought of God? And is not this really a thought of three Gods?

“This conception of God is so pervasive of Christian literature and Christian teaching that it poisons minds least aware of it. . . . Oh, what a misreported, maligned, ill-treated God is ours! Idolatry still flourishes; and in Christian presses, pulpits, books and Sunday-schools. The idols are sometimes grotesque, sometimes horrible; only they are no longer of wood and stone.

“How can you avoid confusion of thought? By taking your thought of God, and your whole thought of God, from the earthly life of the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Tell your boy friend that the ‘Jesus-God’ is the only God; that there is no ‘other One.’ You cannot teach him this lesson in a sentence; you cannot so teach it to yourself. Go constantly, habitually, to the life of Christ for your conception of God. . . . Worship only the God you see in Christ.”

Here we have the frank confession of honest and intelligent men, long and still connected with the orthodox school. And what is it? Why, that the “generally accepted” doctrine of to-day concerning God—the doctrine which “*most Christians believe*,” is “the error of Tritheism, the doctrine that there are three Gods.” And that this conception or misconception of the supreme Object of worship, “is so pervasive of Christian literature and Christian teaching, that it poisons minds least aware of it.” And Dr. Bushnell (who certainly ought to have known) declares that this “generally accepted” doctrine “often produces a painfully bewildered state,” involving the mind of the believer “in a dismal confusion which we cannot think of without the sincerest pity.”

Such a confession as this from distinguished ministers of the orthodox school, is valuable as showing the need there was of a New Theology at the time Swedenborg wrote—a need that still exists, and grows more and more imperative with the increase of intelligence and the progressive development of the human mind. If an error so fundamental as the one here confessed respecting the supreme Object of worship, early invaded the Christian church, it is not to be wondered at that all the other doctrines of Christianity should have been perverted and falsified, and a new revelation have been required to disperse the darkness. It would, indeed, have been a wonder, had this *not* happened. And Swedenborg, in perfect agreement on this subject with the authors just quoted, declares the

prevailing belief of the church in his day to be a belief in three Gods ; and he traced the numerous errors and corruptions of Christian theology to this fundamental falsity. Quoting the words of the Athanasian creed, and showing that “there arises thence no other idea than that there are three Gods unanimous and agreeing together,” he proceeds :

“That the whole system of Christian theology at this day is founded on an idea of three Gods, is evident from the doctrine of justification which is the principal of the doctrinals of the Christian church, both among Roman Catholics and Protestants. That doctrine sets forth that God the Father sent his Son to redeem and save mankind, and gives the Holy Spirit to operate the same. Every man who hears, reads or repeats this, cannot but in thought or idea divide God into three, and suppose that one God sent another and operates by a third. That the same thought of a Divine Trinity distinguished into three Persons, each of whom is God, is continued throughout the rest of the doctrinals of the present church, as from a head into its body, will be demonstrated in its proper place.” (B. E., n. 35.)

And among the propositions affirmed in the same treatise, and briefly analyzed and demonstrated, are the following :

“VI. That, after the idea of a Trinity of Persons and the consequent idea of three Gods, has been rejected, and the idea of one God . . . received in its stead, the tenets of the aforesaid [popular] Theology are seen to be erroneous.

“VII. That then the true and saving faith, which is a faith in one God, united with good works, may be acknowledged and received.

“IX. That the faith of the present day has separated religion from the church, since religion consists in the acknowledgment and worship of one God from faith grounded in charity,

“XI. That from the faith of the present church there results a worship of the mouth and not of the life ; yet the worship of the mouth is accepted by the Lord only in proportion as it proceeds from the worship of the life.

“XIV. That the doctrine of the faith of the present church ascribes to God human attributes ; as that He regarded man from anger, and required to be reconciled ; that He is reconciled through the love He bore his Son and by the intercession of the latter ; that He required to be appeased by the sufferings of his Son, and thus to be brought back to mercy ; and that He imputes the righteousness of his Son to an unrighteous man who supplicates it from faith alone.

“XV. That from the faith of the present church monstrous births have been and may still be produced ; such as instantaneous salvation by an act of immediate mercy ; predestination ; the notions

that God has no respect to men's works, but to faith alone; that there is no connection between charity and faith; that man in conversion is like a stock; with many more heresies of the same kind; . . . and that the heresies from the first times of the church to the present day, have sprung from no other source than the idea of three Gods.

“XVII. That the infestation from falsities and the consequent eclipse of every truth, or the desolation which at this day prevails in the Christian churches, is what is meant by the great affliction such as was not from the beginning of the world, nor ever shall be, Matt. xxiv. 21.

“XXII. That the opening and rejection of the faith of the present church, and the revelation and reception of the tenets of the faith of the New Church [with a life conformable thereto], is what is meant by these words in the Apocalypse: ‘He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new, xxi. 5.’ ”

The New Doctrine of the Trinity.

Now, contrary to the old tripersonal doctrine, and contrary also to that dreary pantheism which doubts or denies the Divine Personality, the New Theology as expounded by Swedenborg, teaches the strict personal unity of God. It teaches that He exists as one Divine Person, in whom nevertheless is a Trinity, represented in Scripture by Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This, however, is not a trinity of persons, but of the great essentials in the one Divine Being—Love, Wisdom and their Proceeding Operation—corresponding to the trinity in the natural sun, of heat, light and their proceeding operation, and illustrated also by the trinity in man who was created in the image and likeness of God; the trinity, that is, of soul, body and their resultant activity, or of will, understanding and their joint operation.*

How perfectly this new doctrine of the Divine Trinity is illustrated by the trinity in the sun of our world, may be seen from their correspondence. The heat of the sun corresponds to the Divine Love, which is the all-begetting principle signified by the *Father*; for love is spiritual heat. The light of the sun corresponds to the Divine Wisdom or Truth, which is the form or manifestation of love, and is what is signified by the *Son*; for truth is spiritual light. And the proceeding operation of the sun's heat and light corresponds to

* For an extended and exhaustive treatment of this subject, with proofs from reason and Scripture, see Barrett's "Letters on the Divine Trinity, addressed to Henry Ward Beecher."

the proceeding and constant operation of the Lord's Love and Wisdom, which is what is signified by the *Holy Spirit*.

This Trinity finds an illustration, also, in the will, understanding and action of every regenerate man. For man is regenerate in the degree that he is created anew after the Divine likeness; or in the degree that the love in his will is an image of the Divine Love; the truth in his understanding an image of the Divine Wisdom; and the sphere of his activities, an image of the sphere of the Divine Benevolence. Man, therefore, when he becomes through regeneration *a living soul*, is a perfect image of the Divine Trinity. Hence, we read that "God created man in his own image." If, then, a true man is an image of the true and living God, he must needs be an image of the trinity in God. And we can best learn the nature of the Divine Trinity, therefore, by contemplating its image in man.

This new doctrine is seen to be at once rational and intelligible; and it will be found, on careful examination, to be equally Scriptural. It enables us to see clearly what is meant when it is said that the Father and the Son are one. They are one as heat and light are one in the sun, or as the soul and body are one person. We see, too, that the Son brings the Father forth to view (John i. 18) as light is the visible manifestation of heat, or as the body brings to view the otherwise invisible soul. And we can understand what is meant when it is said, and why it is said, that no one cometh unto the Father but by the son (John xiv. 6); for no man can approach or contemplate the absolute Divinity (the Father), except in or through the medium of something suited to his finite capacities—something accommodated to his state and needs; and this among Christians is the Divine Humanity (the Son).

Moreover, it presents God to us as a divinely human Being or Person—as a Divine Man. It affirms that the attributes of love, wisdom, mercy, holiness and the like, imply personality, and cannot be predicated of anything but a person. We cannot even imagine love or wisdom to exist apart from the person who loves, thinks and is wise. Nor should we think of applying the adjectives, righteous, holy and just, to gravitation, heat or electricity—to anything, in short, but a self-conscious and rational being or person.

The personality, then, but not the *tripersonality* of God—his absolute oneness in essence and in person, in Whom, nevertheless, are three inseparable essentials—this, coupled with the assumption and glorification of the human by the Divine, is the central doctrine

of the true Christian religion, according to the teachings of the New Church.

The Incarnation of the Divine.

This Church further believes and teaches that the Divine Being did, in the fulness of time, come and reveal himself personally unto men. From love toward his human offspring, He came down into our natural human conditions and relations according to the laws of his own divine order—just as every babe is born. He assumed our finite nature with its vast accumulation of hereditary evil proclivities; had experience of its weaknesses and trials, its doubts and fears, its darkness and conflicts, its poignant griefs and agonizing sorrows; bore the assaults of all the hells by which humanity was ever assailed—and conquered them while glorifying or making Divine his assumed human. And this, in order that He might come nearer to the children of men, and enter into more full and perfect sympathy with them; might more effectually redeem them from their spiritual thralldom; might communicate to them more abundantly of his own unselfish love; might more surely draw and more securely hold them within his own tender embrace.

Here, then—according to the New Theology—in the divinely-begotten and glorified Man of Nazareth, the infinite Father stands revealed. He came, as He said, to bring the Father forth to view. He declared to Philip: “He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father;” “I am in the Father, and the Father in me.” He was the visible manifestation of the Divine Being here on earth; the Infinite revealed in the finite; “God manifest in the flesh;” Divinity in such vital and organic union with humanity as to have experience of all its obscurity, weakness, want and woe, and so be able to deliver it from its spiritual thralldom and fill it with a richer, sweeter and nobler life.

Some Scripture Testimony.

Look at this divinely human Being as He stands revealed in the Gospels and in the Apocalypse! Study his extraordinary character. Read the history of his advent and brief sojourn on earth. On every page, from the manger to the cross—yea, from his miraculous conception to his glorious ascension—we trace the footprints of Divinity. He announces himself as the One whose advent the inspired prophets had foretold. He is declared to be the eternal Word which, from the beginning, “was with God and *was* God;”

as the Maker of all things, having life in himself; as “the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world;” as “the Word made flesh,” and thus dwelling among men; as the personal manifestation of the infinite and everlasting Father; as “the bread of God that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world;” and as endued with “all power in heaven and on earth.” And how fully his teachings and conduct agree with and justify all this! He spoke the words, and did the deeds, and displayed the love and wisdom and power of God. He healed the sick, raised the dead and cast out devils with his word. At his rebuke the winds ceased and the waves subsided. And in that memorable prayer for his murderers, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,” we have the clear outshining of God’s own, tender, long-suffering, forgiving and redeeming love.

And, added to all this, we have the corroborative testimony of the beloved disciple to whom “a door was opened in heaven;” and who was thus introduced, as it were, into the very presence-chamber of the Almighty, and permitted to view things in the bright blaze of that great splendor which surrounds the Throne. And from this high plane of spiritual observation—seeing, not in the obscure *lumen* of the natural mind, but in the crystal light of the celestial realms—he ascribes to the Lord Jesus Christ the attributes and prerogatives which belong to no one but the supreme Being. “Unto Him that loved us and hath washed us from our sins in his own blood . . . to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever,” is the opening ascription in this sublime Apocalypse. Next, the seer beholds Him in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, encircled with a celestial radiance, “his countenance as the sun shineth in his strength;” beaming with love and wisdom all divine, and illumining the churches with his matchless splendor; at the same time declaring Himself “the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” Afterwards he sees Him seated on the throne, and the angels bending in adoration and casting their crowns before Him, and with glad voices chanting, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” And of that white-robed worshiping throng who “came out of great tribulation,” and had “washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,” it is further said: “And He that sitteth

on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; . . . for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters.”

Here we have the proper Object of worship clearly revealed in the person of the glorified Christ. Here we behold Divinity in organic union with humanity ; the Infinite brought within the range of our finite conceptions in merciful adaptation to our needs. Here we see the living God graciously bending to our infirmities and wants ; coming to us as a friend and brother ; sympathizing with us in our hardest experiences ; going down with us into the deepest hells, shielding and succoring us there ; pointing us the way to a higher life—yea, becoming to us **THE WAY** by treading every inch of it Himself.

Where else within the records of history, or the realms of imagination even, do we behold such another divinely human Being?—such a wise, tender, compassionate, loving and life-giving Father? In Jesus Christ alone do we see God in that relation to humanity which is most intimate and tender, and which reveals Him as the almighty Saviour ever ready to impart the light and life and strength needful for the soul's salvation as well as its grandest growth. And by humbly looking to and reverently following after Him—by loving and truly worshiping Him, we become internally and gradually moulded into his likeness ; become more and more receptive of that Divine Humanity which alone is our true life and peace and our eternal joy.

But it is not easy, I know, to fully grasp this central doctrine of the Christian religion—the doctrine of the Divine Humanity. Nor is it easy to clearly convey it in words. It is a doctrine which unfolds with ever-increasing clearness to the inner consciousness, as the Christ-life is received or formed within us by following the Lord in the regeneration. “ If any man will *do* his will, he shall know of the doctrine.”

Need of the Divine Incarnation.

God cannot reveal Himself as He is in his own infinite perfections ; for men are incapable of receiving such revelation. And when a revelation is not received or comprehended, nothing is really revealed. Relatively viewed, it is *no revelation*.

What can finite minds comprehend of absolute Divinity? To see or know God as He is in his Infinity, we must ourselves be infinite.

Our finite capacities, by the very fact that they *are* finite, limit us, hem us in, and render our comprehension of God in his essential Divinity absolutely impossible. Those who imagine that they can know God as He is in his infinite perfections, are much mistaken. Such ability is not vouchsafed to men or angels. Its possession would imply both divinity and infinity in its possessor. Only the Infinite can comprehend the Infinite. Hence the Scripture declaration: “No one hath seen God [the absolute Divinity] at any time: the only begotten Son [the humanity] which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath brought Him forth to view.”

The infinite God, therefore, descends and reveals Himself (so far as that is possible) under finite conditions and in a finite human form. Divinity comes down, and speaks and acts and prays and labors and agonizes and suffers, and thus reveals Itself in humanity,—the Divine in the human, the Infinite in the finite, the Father in the Son; and this, in infinite condescension to our human wants and finite capacities. It is something like what a great and good man does, whose wisdom is beyond the comprehension of a little child, but who nevertheless comes down to the child’s infantile state; accommodates himself to its feeble capacities; renders himself approachable, intelligible, helpful and loveable to the child in and through the medium of his body; that is, by the gifts he bestows, and the lessons he teaches, and the feelings he expresses, and the things he does for the child through the body’s instrumentality. In this and in no other way can the great man reveal himself to the little child.

To pursue the illustration a step further.—No person of mature age can impart his knowledge and experience to a little child. He may tell the child in simplest language all he knows of geological, astronomical, physiological and chemical science; he may give utterance to his highest conceptions of the character of God and the grandeur of the universe; he may tell of his religious experiences, of his internal and agonizing conflicts with infernal spirits, and the sweet and serene peace that bathed his soul when those conflicts were ended; he may *tell* the child all this, but how much of it will be received or comprehended? Imagine yourself the teacher, and what, after all, have you revealed to that child, of your higher knowledge and deeper experiences? Nothing—absolutely nothing. Nor is it in your power or the power of language to convey to him an idea of your higher mental operations and spiritual states. You cannot re-

veal yourself to him as you really are interiorly—in your advanced stage of intellectual and spiritual development. And the simple reason is, that the child is incapable of receiving such revelation. He can form no conception of the knowledge or mental states you speak of. Your words are meaningless to him, for there is nothing within him to interpret their meaning. The receptacles for such knowledge are not opened in him yet. The attempt, therefore, to impart it to him is like attempting to teach the beasts of the field moral philosophy; or like chanting sweet melodies in the ears of the deaf, or exhibiting lovely pictures to the eyes of the blind.

No : You can reveal to a child only so much of yourself as he is capable of receiving. You must bring your wisdom down to his state of comprehension before he can receive it. You must meet him on his own plane, and adapt yourself to his infantile capacities. You must enter feelingly and sympathetically into his little plans and pastimes. You must help him over his difficulties, and assist him in overcoming his fears, which may be very many, and to you, no doubt, very foolish. As yet he has but little understanding; therefore he can receive but little instruction, and this chiefly through the medium of the five senses, and concerning the sensible objects immediately around him.

Now if you fully understand this infantile state, if you know precisely all the little child's wants and fears and limitations, you can adapt yourself perfectly to his needs. You can come down to and sympathize with him in his feeble state; you can enter into his childish thoughts and feelings, can instruct and inspire him, can lift him up mentally and morally, and lead him along little by little to the state of mature and robust manhood.

But how could you do this without the requisite knowledge of the child's weakness and wants? And how could you obtain this knowledge if you had not once been a child yourself? You remember how *you* felt and thought when you were of that feeble age; therefore you can understand and sympathize with the child. You have yourself had the same infantile experience that he is now having. You have passed through all the states of childhood from infancy to mature years. And if your recollection of these states were full and perfect, you would be able to come still nearer to the child; to enter more fully and with more perfect sympathy into all his states; and so be to him a wiser counsellor, a better friend, a more efficient helper and guide.

This may serve to illustrate in some measure the importance and use of the Divine Incarnation. For in respect to Jehovah God, all mankind are as little children—very little, very weak, very ignorant, and of very feeble understanding.

God Accommodated to our Needs.

Then in what capacity or relation do we, in our selfish and sinful state, most need to know God? Not as Creator, Preserver and Governor of the material universe, but as our spiritual Illuminator, Regenerator and Saviour. True, the devout mind sees God in the external world. The visible universe proclaims his wisdom, his majesty and his power. We see Him in the grandeur of rivers and mountains, of oceans and cataracts; in the glory of the night and the splendors of the morning; in the flowers of spring, the luxuriance of summer and the golden fruits of autumn; in the beautiful procession of the seasons and the wild magnificence of the storm. But here we see Him only in his vastness, his majesty and his might. We are overwhelmed and lost amid such manifestations of his greatness. Yet we behold not here the God that is suited to our spiritual needs. It is a God far off, not graciously near to our souls. Not here do we see Him in any tender or vital relation to humanity. In all the beauty and magnificence of the material *cosmos*—in the grandeur of the ocean, the lightning or the starlit sky—not here do we behold Him ministering to the soul's deepest wants. Not here do we see Him living, laboring, battling and suffering for us; freely giving Himself—his unspeakable love and wisdom—for us; resisting and overcoming selfishness and every inherited tendency to evil; working out a glorious redemption for us; developing the grandest and divinest life under adverse conditions; revealing that sweet and tender, yea, that divine humanity which is our solace and our hope, and is to be our heaven and joy and crown of rejoicing.

But in the person of Jesus Christ, God is revealed in a form perfectly adapted to our condition and needs. Here we behold Him in the most intimate and vital relation to mankind; clothed in our frail, finite and perverted humanity; Himself a man among men; yet, as to his internal, the supreme and only God. Here we behold Him in a form that we can approach and understand, and that our affections can lay hold on. Here we see Him living and acting in our human conditions and relations, laden, too, with all our hereditary proclivities to evil; "God manifest in the flesh;" feeling as

we feel, tempted as we are tempted, suffering as we suffer, and triumphing over death and hell as it is now possible (through his Divine assistance) for us to triumph. We see Him born of a woman as we were born ; clothed with a body like our own ; passing through the various states from infancy to manhood, through which we have to pass. And then we see Him consecrating his life to deeds of love and mercy ; forgetful of Himself, and thoughtful only of others' good ; not anxious to be served, but only to serve ; continually going about doing good ; healing the sick ; feeding the hungry ; befriending the friendless ; strengthening the weak ; enlightening the ignorant ; compassionating the poor ; sympathizing with the sorrowing ; comforting the mourners ; and helping all who needed help and were willing to receive it. We see Him meek and gentle under persecution ; patient and resigned in suffering ; forbearing when assailed with bitterest taunts ; the constant friend of truth and right ; the uncompromising foe of hypocrisy and wrong ; "kind to the unthankful and to the evil ;" loving and forgiving towards his enemies ; and breathing out that ever-memorable prayer for his murderers with his last expiring breath.

Subjected to Human Conditions.

What a display of Divinity in humanity is this ! We here see how God lived when He subjected Himself to our human conditions. This is the way He felt and thought and spoke and acted and suffered and forgave here in this ultimate sensuous realm. It was ever the same benignant spirit—love speaking, love acting, love suffering. Christ was the visible embodiment in human form of the perfect Divine Love. He was God come down to earth and subjected to our earthly conditions and limitations ; God brought into states of darkness and suffering and fierce temptation,—an experience made possible only through his organic connection with our sin-laden humanity.

And here is precisely where we, as weak, erring and sinful creatures, need to see and know God. We need to know Him in his humanity ; that is, we need to know what He would do if placed in our circumstances and invested with our finite and grovelling nature ; made to feel the fire of evil passions and the cravings of selfish and worldly loves ; subjected like us to the malignant assaults and terrible goadings of infernal spirits. And in Jesus Christ He has shown us just what He would do—just what He *has done*, indeed. Here

we see the true God, not as He is in his Infinity or absolute Divinity—for in this He is unapproachable and incomprehensible by finite minds—but in his tender and beautiful and comprehensible, yea, in his Divine Humanity. Here we see Him ministering, weeping, sorrowing, praying, suffering, tempted, struggling, like ourselves—but never sinning, never yielding to the tempter. Here, therefore, our God is brought graciously near and into closest sympathy with us, and we into closest sympathy with Him. He is able to be “touched with the feeling of our infirmities,” because, as saith the prophet, “He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.”

Humanity Glorified.

Nor is this all. While God was coming into closer sympathy with humanity by living and suffering as He did in the flesh ; while He was displaying his infinite compassion down on the lowest plane of human life, ministering to bodily infirmities and wants, working miracles of mercy and healing in the natural sphere, He was at the same time performing still more stupendous miracles in the sphere above nature. He was doing deeds of mercy yet more sublime and wondrous in the spiritual realm. He was cleansing his assumed humanity (which, by inheritance, was prone to all kinds of evil) from its corrupt inclinations and depraved tendencies. He was eradicating from that humanity every germ of selfishness—purging it of every foul hereditary taint. In his assumed humanity were included all the tendencies and depravities of universal humanity. Therefore He was able, through the medium of such assumed human, to touch the hells at all points. He came in conflict with every class of infernal spirits ; had experience of all their craft and subtlety and dire malignity ; and through his own consummate wisdom and power He subdued them all, and reduced the hells to a state of order unknown before in that dark realm. As the prophet Isaiah again says : “Therefore his own arm brought salvation unto Him ; and his righteousness, it sustained Him.”

And while He was reducing the hells to order, and purging his assumed humanity of its evil hereditary taints, He was at the same time filling that humanity with his own absolute Divinity. In this way He successively put off all that was imperfect and finite pertaining to his assumed humanity, and put on that which was infinite and perfect. He thus glorified that humanity by imbuing it with his own Divine life. He exalted it to a perfect union with the

Divinity that was in Him from conception. He made it a Divine Humanity; that is, a humanity endued with all Divine powers, gifts and graces. Therefore He says: "As the Father [the essential Divinity] hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son [the humanity] to have life in Himself." "I and the Father are one."

The process whereby this oneness of Divinity with humanity was effected was a purely Divine process; and can be comprehended only in the degree that one experiences the likeness of it in himself; that is, in the degree that he "puts off the old man" that Paul speaks of, and "puts on the new man" by regeneration from on High; thus "making in himself of twain one new man, so making peace."

A New Spiritual Force Manifest.

And still further: By the assumption and glorification of our human nature, God placed Himself in a new and more intimate relation to universal humanity. He could thenceforward and forever draw graciously near to all men as He could not before. He could impart unto them his quickening influence and his renewing grace as never before. He could enlighten them in their darkness, sympathize with them in their trials, strengthen them in their weakness, shield them in temptation, and so exert or make operative for them his redeeming love, as He could not before. From the hour when it could be said—*was* said—of that sublime work of glorifying the human, "It is finished," a new spiritual force became manifest among men. A new and Divine energy began to pervade the moral universe. A new light began to be diffused, and new life to pulsate in the hearts of men, especially of those who looked to Him in humble and confiding faith; and this, too, in fulfilment of the Divine promise. For the Lord, while yet in the flesh, spoke of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit or Spirit of truth, which He would send after his departure, but which could not be sent before. "It is expedient for you," said He to his disciples, "that I go away: For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." And again: "When the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." "He will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment." "He will guide you into all truth." And still more conclusive in John vii. 39, "For the Holy Spirit was not

yet *given*, because that Jesus was not yet glorified ;'' a declaration showing that the procession of that divine-human sphere or effluence called the Holy Spirit, was a consequence of the assumption and glorification of the humanity.

God in Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, is the infinite God brought down to our finite comprehension and accommodated to our human needs. The Divine Trinity expressed in Scripture by Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is all in Him. This is the teaching of the New Theology, as it clearly is that of the great Apostle to the Gentiles.

But although the fulness of the Divinity dwells in Jesus Christ, yet as to the human side of his nature He can be approached, comprehended and loved even by a little child. For a child can see Him in imagination, and be made to understand something of his sweet and tender humanity. His affections can be drawn out toward Him by the simple recital of his deeds of mercy and compassion, his gentleness, forbearance, integrity, courage, sincerity, his patience in suffering, his unbounded forgiveness and his unselfish love. And in learning about Christ, the child is learning about God. He is acquiring a genuine knowledge of the Divine character. In learning to love and obey Christ, he is learning to love and obey God. And although it is only the external humanity—the mere clothing of Divinity—that the child sees and learns about, the knowledge is none the less important for all that. It becomes in him the solid and enduring basis of the kingdom of heaven. It is like learning the literal sense of the Word. As this sense is the foundation and containant of all the higher senses, so the knowledge and love of the man, Jesus—the Lord's mere external humanity—are the foundation and containant of that higher knowledge and purer love to be unfolded in maturer years.

And as the child advances toward maturity and is able to comprehend more and more of true humanity, the Saviour's character, in its higher and holier aspects, unfolds itself to him with ever increasing fulness. And still later, when the burdens and sorrows and responsibilities of life press heavily ; when the foes of his own spiritual household rise up in their strength and fierceness ; when the spheres of infernal spirits invade and darken his moral firmament, shutting out the light of the sun, moon and stars ; oh ! then it is that this knowledge of God in Christ ;—of Divinity in organic union

with humanity—comes to him with consoling and strengthening power. In the clear light of this heavenly doctrine he sees that there are no abysses to which his soul can sink, where Christ Himself has not been ; no darkness which can overshadow him, that is more appalling than that known to Christ ; no states of temptation more agonizing, no assaults from hell more fierce, than those which Christ experienced. And seeing and knowing all this, and realizing that in and of himself he has no power to resist the assaults of infernal spirits, but that the Divine Humanity—the eternal and almighty Saviour—has “all power in heaven and on earth,” he looks to Him, and prays to Him, and confides in Him, and so (with his own voluntary co-operation) receives from Him the succor that he needs.

And thus through all our journey from the cradle to the grave, Divinity in organic union with humanity ; God in the person of Jesus Christ ; God invested with our infirm nature ; God living and laboring and suffering as man among men ; God as Enlightener, Redeemer, Regenerator and Saviour,—the very embodiment on earth of all human and all divine excellence ; God in a form approachable and comprehensible by finite minds ; God able to come to us through the medium of his Divine Humanity, as the invisible soul of your friend comes to you through the medium of his visible body ; and, coming in this comprehensible and lovable form, able also to enlighten and quicken and strengthen us by his grace, and lead us upward in the heavenly paths ;—this is the God we most need to know. This is the God exactly suited to our condition, capacities and spiritual wants. And throughout the eternal Ages, the wondrous wealth of his redeeming love will continue to unfold more and more in accommodation to the ever advancing states of all his humble followers.

Such is the belief and teaching of the New Church respecting the Central Doctrine of the Christian religion—the true and only proper Object of religious worship. Its supreme importance is our sufficient excuse and justification for dwelling upon it at considerable length.

“Lo ! this is our God ! We have waited for Him, that He may save us. This is the Lord ; we have waited for Him ; we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” (Isa. xxv. 9.)

III.—*THE ATONEMENT.*

Before explaining the doctrine of the New Church on this subject, it may be expedient to notice briefly the Old and commonly received doctrine. The reader can then judge which of the two is most in accordance with reason and Scripture;—which bears most conspicuously the impress of heaven, and which looks most like the offspring of man's self-derived intelligence.

If the Old doctrine of the Divine Trinity—corrupted into a trinity of *persons*—is erroneous, it was not possible for the other leading doctrines of Christianity to escape corruption and falsification from an error so fundamental. And the most prominent, as well as the most mischievous falsity, because the most captivating and delusive, is that concerning the Atonement as commonly held and taught. This doctrine, we are aware, has been differently understood and explained at different times, and by different persons at the same time. And, notwithstanding the supreme importance which is very properly attached to a right understanding of it, probably not many among the most learned of the “evangelical” school at this time, would explain this doctrine in precisely or even substantially the same way. However this may be, the following summary statement of it in Buck's Theological Dictionary, said to have been drawn from distinguished Trinitarian writers on this subject, may be taken as embodying the generally received view:—

“The Atonement,” say these writers, “is the satisfying divine justice by Jesus Christ giving Himself a ransom for us, undergoing the penalty due to our sins, and thereby releasing us from that punishment which God might justly inflict upon us. All mankind having broken the law, God in his infinite wisdom did not think fit to pardon sinful man without some compensation for his broken law. For if the great Ruler of the world had pardoned the sins of men without any satisfaction, then his laws might have seemed not worth the vindicating.

“Because God intended to make a full display of the terrors of his justice, and his divine resentment for the violation of his law, therefore he appointed his own Son to satisfy for the breach of it by becoming a proper sacrifice of expiation or atonement. The Divine Being having received such ample satisfaction for sin, by the suffering of his own Son, can *honorably* forgive his creature man who was a transgressor.”

And if any one desires to know what this doctrine is, as held and taught at the present day, let him turn to the “Confession of Faith”

of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, published in 1838. He will there find these words :

“ Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father’s justice in their behalf. He was given by the Father *for them, and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead.*” (P. 55.)

In the same chapter of this work we are told that God justifies sinners “ *by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them*” (§ 1) ; and that “ Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification.” (§ 2.) In other parts of the same work we find mention made of Christ having *borne the weight of God’s wrath, satisfied his justice, procured his favor, purchased reconciliation*, etc. (See pp. 44, 161, 168.)

In the Catechism (No. 2) of the Methodist Episcopal Church, published in 1839, it is stated (p. 14) that “ Christ, by means of his sufferings and death, offered a full satisfaction and atonement to Divine Justice, for the sins of the whole world.” And immediately after, it is added by way of explanation, that, “ because He was perfectly righteous, there was an infinite value and merit in his death, which, being undergone for our sakes and *in our stead*, Almighty God exercises his mercy in the forgiveness of sins, consistently with his justice and holiness.”

Such is the commonly received doctrine of a *vicarious atonement*, as given in the words of its believers and advocates.* And it will be found substantially the same as here stated, in the Catechisms, Creeds, Formularies and Confessions of Faith, of all the religious sects who believe in the tripersonality of God. Indeed, this doctrine, as I have already said, is a legitimate offspring of the tripersonal theory. And according to the language in which it is set forth by its advocates, it represents the Father or first person in the Trinity, as a stern, inflexible, vindictive God, who is angry with the human race on account of their transgressions, and will by no means forgive them their sins, without a *full equivalent or satisfaction* for his violated law. It represents the Son or second person in the

* There is reason to believe that many of the best Christians in nearly all the churches of to-day utterly reject this doctrine as set forth in their own creeds.

Trinity, as a tender and compassionate God, who is moved with pity towards the human race; and in order to satisfy the Father's demands, and procure his favor, or purchase for man a release from his vengeance, He comes into the world of his own free will, and pays the penalty due to the sins of all mankind by suffering and dying upon the cross. The Father accepts the ransom, is reconciled towards the human race, and can then "*honorably* forgive his creature man;" or, as some understand it, He then *imputes* to mankind the merit of Christ's sufferings and death, or feels toward our race as if they themselves had suffered the merited punishment. It is for this reason that the Atonement is commonly called by Christian writers *vicarious*. Christ, they say, suffered as our *vicar* or substitute—suffered *in our stead*—and, by his own death, paid the penalty which the Father demanded for his violated law. In this way He satisfied the demands of Divine Justice, and purchased a pardon for man, or *propitiated* the Deity.

This doctrine needs no comment. It would seem as if every honest man and woman who are not willing to utterly renounce their understanding in matters of religion and accept a blind faith, could hardly fail to perceive that such a doctrine *must* be false the moment they hear it stated. Yet no other doctrine is clung to with such blind and inveterate obstinacy as this—for the reason, doubtless, that no other promises the sinner salvation on such easy terms.

The New Doctrine of Atonement.

What, now, is the New Church doctrine on this subject? It is not easy to present it in such a manner that it will be readily apprehended by the natural man. For until we have had some experience of the Atonement—until our natural has, to some extent, been brought under subjection and into agreement or *oneness* with our spiritual man, which takes place only as we become regenerated, we need not expect to understand much about the at-one-ment of the Divine with the Human in Jesus Christ.

It must be plain to every one that the Old doctrine on this subject is based upon, and grows legitimately out of, the doctrine of *three Divine Persons*. It is wholly incompatible with the doctrine of God's personal unity, and cannot stand for a moment when this is admitted. For when it is seen that the Lord Jesus Christ is the one and *only* Divine Person in whom "dwells all the fulness of the Godhead," then there is no *first* Person apart from Him to demand satisfaction

for his violated law ; no one whose wrath is to be appeased by the sufferings and death of another, or to whom the penalty due to man's transgressions is to be paid. It is plain, therefore, that the Old doctrine on this subject does by no means consist with the New doctrine of the Trinity (see p. 23), nor with the supreme and absolute divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

According to the belief and teaching of the New Church, man was originally created in the image and likeness of God. His understanding was created to be an image and so a finite receptacle of the Divine Wisdom, and his will to be a likeness and hence a finite receptacle of the Divine Love ; and from the union of these two (love and wisdom or good and truth) in his mind, there proceeded from him a sphere of beneficent life and action, imaging in a finite degree the Divine Proceeding, or the sphere of the Divine Beneficence. Man did not then receive truth separate or disjoined from its corresponding affection of goodness ; but his will was in perfect agreement with his understanding, and his works were therefore all good. Thus he was in a state of spiritual agreement or conjunction with God, uniting in himself each element, and therefore being a finite image, of the Divine Trinity. Accordingly he is represented, in the symbolic language of Scripture, as being originally placed “in the garden of Eden,” for his innocent and blissful state is just what such a garden corresponds to or symbolizes. But he did not continue in that blissful state. Through an abuse of the human faculties with which he was gifted, and without which he would not have been man, he gradually came to think his wisdom and goodness his own, and to be puffed up with pride on account of them. And so from loving and worshiping God, he came at last to love and worship himself. From being a *true*, he came to be a false and *inverted*, image of the Creator. From his Eden state of supreme love to God, he fell into a state of supreme self-love, which is infernal—the very opposite of that in which he was originally created. His whole moral nature became deranged—diseased “from the sole of the foot, even unto the head.” Thus he became alienated—spiritually separated and far removed—from his Maker ; and therefore he is said, in the symbolic language of Scripture, to have been *driven out* of the Garden wherein his Creator originally placed him.

But God was not angry with man for this, neither did He forsake him. On the contrary, He pursued him with infinite love and

compassion. He came into the ultimates of nature ; became Himself a man ; assumed our frail and fallen nature with all its evil tendencies and corrupt inclinations ; and this, in order that He might overcome these inclinations, restore the order that man himself had disturbed, and bring him back into his original state of blissful conjunction with Himself ; for in this state only could man find peace and rest. And this great work He accomplished by means of successive combats with and victories over the evil spirits that infested humanity. These combats and victories took place *in* the humanity that He assumed, and could not have taken place *out of* it, nor without its assumption. Hence the necessity of the Divine Incarnation. And by the same acts which were his temptations, the last of which was the passion of the cross, He united, in his assumed humanity, Divine Love and Divine Wisdom, and so made that humanity itself Divine. That is, He *glorified* the humanity ; or in other words, exalted it to a perfect union with the Divinity that was in Him from conception.

While in the flesh, our Lord had both a human and a divine nature, just as every man has an external and an internal, or what is sometimes called a lower and a higher nature. As to the external human which He derived from the mother, He was frail, finite, prone to evil, and therefore liable to temptation like any other man ; but as to his internal, He was Jehovah God—infinite, perfect, divine, incapable of being tempted. By his own divine power, He gradually overcame the evil appertaining to his assumed humanity ; completely eradicated all its selfish and evil proclivities ; conquered all the hells ; put off all that was frail and finite, and brought down into every region of that humanity his own Divine Love and Wisdom, and so brought it *at-one* with the essential and indwelling Divinity.

This is what is understood in the New Church by the *Atonement*, or *At-one-ment* (as the word was originally syllabled and pronounced)—a bringing *at-one* of the human and the Divine, or as the Apostle says, “making in Himself, of twain, one new man.” And the purpose of this At-one-ment was, that the Lord might ever after be able to bring our external or natural *at-one* with our internal or spiritual man—goodness *at-one* with truth in our minds—and so bring us into complete spiritual union or at-one-ment with Himself. When this is effected we are reconciled to God ; no longer alienated, but *at-one* with Him. Hence we read “that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.”

We know that the Saviour when on earth endured temptations ; for these are often referred to in the New Testament. But how could He have been tempted, unless there had been in Him some propensity to evil ? Absolute Divinity cannot be tempted. And that there was some such evil proclivity in Him, is plain from his own declaration : “ And for their sakes *I sanctify myself*, that they also might be sanctified through the truth ”—language which shows that there was something in Him that *needed* to be sanctified.

But although the Lord as to his maternal humanity, was full of hereditary tendencies to evil like other men, yet he never ultimated any of those tendencies ; He never made the evil his own by actual life. Herein he was different from all other men. Therefore “ He knew no sin ; ” for sin consists, not in having inclinations to evil, but in acting from them, and so making them our own. This agrees with the teaching of the Apostle, who says : “ He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

Its Importance Practically Viewed.

From this brief explanation of the New Church doctrine of At-one-ment, the reader cannot fail to see that, while it accords with the teachings of both reason and Scripture, it is at the same time a doctrine of the highest *practical* moment. For as man was originally created in the image of God, so he must now be *re-created* after the image of Christ’s glorification. Hence we are required to “ follow Him in the regeneration.” He is “ THE WAY ; ” and before we can *follow* Him, we need to know the way. There must be a descent or birth of truth in our minds corresponding to the Lord’s birth into the natural world : For He came as the Divine Truth. “ The Word was made flesh.” And we must then endure temptations as He did ; For He says to his followers : “ Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptations ; and I appoint unto you a kingdom,” etc. (Luke xxii. 28.) By means of truth from the Word, which is “ the sword of the Spirit,” we must fight against and overcome the evils of our natural man, as He fought against and overcame the evils of his maternal humanity ; for He says : “ To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as *I also* overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne.” (Rev. iii. 21.) Thus we are sanctified “ through the truth,” as He was. And this is what is meant by being washed, cleansed, redeemed, and saved by the blood of Christ ; for by His

blood, in the spiritual sense, is meant the divine truth of the Word. This is that “blood of the new covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins”—“the blood of Christ that cleanseth from all sin.”

When thus we take up our cross and follow the Lord—when we *do* the truth which we understand by shunning as a sin whatever evil the truth forbids, then truth is brought at-one with goodness in our minds, as the Divine Wisdom was brought at-one with Divine Love in the Lord’s assumed humanity. Then our external is brought at-one with our internal, our natural at-one with our spiritual man, our lower at-one with our higher nature, as the Lord’s assumed human was brought at-one with the Divine. And so, as the Apostle says, we “*receive* the at-one-ment through our Lord Jesus Christ.” That is, we receive that pure and unselfish love which is forever at-one—forever in marriage union—with the divine truth; and thus our hearts are brought at-one with the only Lord and Saviour.

We thus see that the doctrine of the At-one-ment, as held and taught in the New Church, is one of high practical moment. It involves the entire doctrine of man’s regeneration.

IV.—*SIN: ITS NATURE.*

According to the teachings of Swedenborg, a broad distinction is said to be made between hereditary or transmitted evil, and sin. Every one, he says, inherits from foregone ancestry certain propensities of greater or less degrees of strength, which incline him to seek his own ease, pleasure, profit or personal gratification, regardless of the wishes, rights, profit or welfare of others. He insists that the merely natural man is supremely selfish. But we are not *sinner*s because of this natural selfishness, or these inherited proclivities to evil. Sin, he says, consists in the conscious violation of some acknowledged law or rule of right—in acting contrary to some known moral precept, or some perceived and acknowledged moral obligation.

A man may inherit a strong propensity to lie or steal; but he is not a sinner because of this inheritance, any more than he is a liar or a thief before he commits these offences. He sins only when he ultimates this evil propensity, and actually lies or steals, knowing that to do so is to act contrary to a divine command. The propen-

sity may be very strong in him ; but if he regards its indulgence as wicked—as something contrary to the will and Word of God—and therefore shuns it, he does not sin. We sin only when we *do* evil, with the knowledge at the time that it *is* evil. The selfish or evil desire may be very strong in us ; but if we regard and shun its indulgence as a sin, we are then free from guilt ;—free from sin, though the evil inclination may still remain.

And not only so, but by continuing to do this, and at the same time acknowledging that it is the Lord alone who gives us the disposition and the power to resist the vicious propensity, we gradually weaken and overcome the evil inclination, and lose, at last, all desire to transgress. And in this consists the great work of regeneration. It is that thorough mastery over all inherited vicious proclivities, which the Lord gives to every one who acknowledges Him and humbly strives to obey his precepts.

V.—*REMISSION OF SINS.*

Intimately connected with the nature of sin, is the doctrine concerning its remission. The prevailing idea among Christians a hundred years ago,—nor has it become quite obsolete yet,—respecting the Divine forgiveness or remission of sins, was altogether erroneous. It was believed that sins could be forgiven and the sinning soul cleansed of its defilements by an act of immediate Divine mercy, or through the willingness of God to exercise forgiveness—as natural filth may be washed off from the body ; and that this could be effected instantaneously, and is actually granted in a moment as the reward of the exercise of faith alone.

But Swedenborg teaches (or shows us that the Scripture teaches) and the New Church believes, a very different doctrine. He says that the Divine Love which is Mercy itself, is the very essence of forgiveness ; and that this Love is ever ready and waiting to flow into human hearts with its ineffable sweetness and delights ; but that it can flow in and be received only in the degree that we come to see our evils in the light of truth, humbly acknowledge them, and shun their indulgence as sins against God. As we do this, the evil of self-love which is the fountain of all other evil loves and the progenitor and instigator of all evil deeds, is overcome or removed, and the good of disinterested neighborly love flows in, and with it a sweet and heavenly peace—a sense of the Divine presence which is essen-

tial Love and Forgiveness. So that the Divine forgiveness is not and cannot be experienced, except on condition of repentance and obedience—a voluntary turning away from moral evil, and yielding obedience to the laws of heavenly charity;—a gradual *losing*, through self-denial and self-surrender, of our own life for the Lord's sake, and the consequent reception or *finding* of that true and higher life which is from Above, and is promised to the regenerate. Accordingly Swedenborg says :

“ It is believed by most people within the church that the remission of sins is the wiping or washing them away as of filth by water ; and that after remission they are clean and pure in the way in which they go. Such an opinion prevails, especially with those who ascribe the all of salvation to faith alone.

“ But it is to be observed that the case is quite otherwise with the remission of sins. The Lord remits sins to every one, since He is Mercy itself ; nevertheless they are not remitted on that account, unless a man performs serious repentance, desists from evils, and afterwards lives the life of faith and charity, and this even to the end of his life. When this is done the man receives from the Lord spiritual life which is called new life ; and when he looks from this new life at the evils of his former life and holds them in aversion and horror, then sins are first remitted ; for then the man is kept in truths and goods, and withheld from evils by the Lord. Hence it is evident what is meant by the remission of sins, and that it cannot be granted in an hour nor in a year.” (A. C. 9014. See also A. C. 9443-9454.)

VI.—REDEMPTION.

THE verb *redeem*, from which comes the noun *redemption*, is derived from the Latin words *re*, again, back, and *emere*, to buy ; and means, therefore, according to Webster, “ to purchase back ”—“ to ransom, liberate, or rescue from captivity or bondage, or from any obligation or liability to suffer, by paying an equivalent ;—as, to *redeem* a captive,” etc. Persons captured in war and held in captivity, are said to be *redeemed* when the price demanded for their release is paid, and they are set at liberty. This is the common and literal meaning of the word.

And up to the time when Swedenborg wrote (and the creeds have not changed much since) the prevailing belief among Christians was, that Jesus Christ, by his sufferings and death, paid the penalty due to man's transgressions, and thus ransomed or released believers from their state of bondage to sin and Satan. This has been and is still

the prevailing idea of the divine work wrought by Jesus Christ. An eminent authority says :

“ Jesus Christ gave himself a ransom for us, undergoing the penalty due to our sins, and thereby releasing us from that punishment which God might justly inflict upon us.”—*Buck's Theological Dictionary*.

The “ Presbyterian Confession of Faith ” for the United States (1838) says :

“ Christ, by his obedience and death, did *fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified*, and did make a proper, real and *full satisfaction to his Father's justice* in their behalf.”

And the Catechism (1839) for the Methodist Episcopal Church says :

“ Christ, by means of his sufferings and death, *offered a full satisfaction . . . to Divine Justice for the sins of the world.*” And the reason assigned is : “ Because He was perfectly righteous, there was an infinite value and merit in his death which was undergone for our sakes *and in our stead.*”

And so generally accepted has been, and is still, this idea of the nature of the great work of human redemption, that we find the theological meaning of the word *redemption*, as given by a great American lexicographer, to be : “ The procuring of God's favor by the sufferings and death of Christ.”

The Old doctrine, then, on this subject is : That the human race, being in a state of captivity to sin and Satan, was ransomed—bought off—released from its bondage, and consequently from hell and its miseries, by the payment of an infinite price, to wit, the voluntary sufferings and death of the Son of God (the second person in the Divine Trinity) : Precisely as a slave may sometimes be released from bondage or a prisoner from his confinement, by the payment of a stipulated price.

Now it needs but a little exercise of one's reason and understanding to see what absurdities, inconsistencies and contradictions this doctrine involves. 1. It is a doctrine of pure naturalism, and one that chimes in with the gross conceptions of the natural man. 2. It involves the idea of *two* Divine Beings, very different in disposition and character ; —one, inflexible and unrelenting, the other, all tenderness and compassion, willing to suffer the extremest agonies for the benefit of his creatures. 3. It is inconsistent with itself.

For in cases of natural redemption the price must be paid to him who holds the captive in his power. If (as the doctrine admits) mankind was in bondage to Satan, then the price of redemption was due to him, and not to God the Father as the doctrine teaches. 4. It mars the beauty and perfection of God's character, representing Him as a monster of injustice and cruelty. For what could be more unjust or cruel than to release sinners from the penalty due to their transgressions, and accept the sufferings of a perfectly innocent being as the price of redemption? 5. And, finally, it involves an utter misconception of the nature of moral or spiritual evil, and the way of escape from it.

No : The old doctrine of redemption will not stand the test of a rational examination. The closer it is scanned, the more unreasonable and hideous it appears ; and the more certain we are that it is a doctrine which men in a low state of mind have invented, or have drawn from the Bible only by putting upon it a natural and sensuous interpretation. For it is as contrary to the general spirit and teaching of Scripture, as it is to the dictates of enlightened reason.

The New Doctrine.

Turn now to the doctrine on this subject as revealed for the New Church. Of course in a treatise like the present, we can do little more than exhibit it in a general way—as it were, in brief outline.

The end for which God created man, according to the belief and teaching of the New Church, was, that there might be a heaven of angels from the human race—a countless host of rational, wise and loving creatures, images and likenesses of Himself, capable of receiving his own life, and of being made unspeakably and eternally happy in the mutual and reciprocal impartation of that life. And can we conceive of a more sublime or beneficent purpose, or one more worthy of a Being of infinite wisdom and love?

But it was indispensable to this state of highest human bliss, that man should have a *selfhood* as the basis of his individuality, and should be gifted with rationality and liberty. Without these faculties he would not have been human, nor capable of heavenly blessedness.

But these sublime endowments which are man's chief glory, and are, indeed, essential to his humanity, rendered possible his lapse into a state of spiritual disorder, degradation and woe. Nay, with beings so endowed, such lapse was not only possible but highly

probable—a result almost certain to follow from such gifts. However that may be, it cannot be denied that such spiritual lapse *did* occur. In the course of many generations the race became completely immersed in selfishness and sin. They lost all knowledge of the true and only God, of the laws and capabilities of their own souls; and consequently lost sight of the way that leads to that exalted and blissful state for which they were designed. From a state of mutual love, they fell into one of mutual hostility. They turned the light that was originally in them into darkness—God's love into hatred—just as the henbane and foxglove convert the sun's light and heat and the sweet dews of the morning into malignant poisons. God's life in men thus became changed into its opposite—into the life of hell. The race became supremely selfish; their souls filled with all base passions and malignant feelings. And in this state they passed into the spiritual world, then as now taking their own characters or ruling loves along with them. Of course they were separated from the denizens of heaven through the operation of the great law of spiritual affinity—the law that forever tends to draw together those of like character, and to separate those who are unlike.

In this way there came at length to be an immense multitude of evil spirits in the other world—in short, a hell of devils. And the race once fairly started on its downward course, like a young man who has once broken the bonds of conscience and moral restraint—has begun to lie, swear, cheat and gamble—sunk rapidly lower and lower into the abyss of darkness and woe. Thus the hells increased more rapidly than the heavens; and at last they became so multitudinous, so gigantic in strength and overmastering in their power, that their disorderly and malignant sphere threatened to deprive the human race of liberty and rationality; began to infest the bodies as well as the souls of men, and even threatened the stability of the heaven of angels.

Here, then, was a great crisis in the moral universe. The human race was about to perish. Man's freedom and rationality were about to be destroyed through the preponderating influence of the hells. It is easy to understand this, if we reflect for a moment on the degrading and corrupting influence of drunkenness, profanity and licentiousness in a community where these vices have become extensively prevalent, and consider also the intimate connection

between spirits in the other world and men in this. And the Bible affords abundant testimony to the fact of such connection.*

This was "the fulness of time." It was the point beyond which the malign influence of the hells could not be permitted to go;—beyond which they could not go without imperiling the welfare and even the existence of the human race. What, then, was to be done to avert this peril? Revelations had been vouchsafed, but these had been misunderstood and perverted. God had spoken, but the race had become deaf to his warnings and counsels. He had sent prophets and wise men, but their words were not heeded. Through the over-mastering influence of the hells, the love and even the knowledge of righteousness had been lost, and the race was on the point of losing also its properly human faculties—its power to distinguish and its ability to choose between right and wrong.

At such a juncture, what should an infinitely wise and loving Father have done? What, but the very thing that He *did* do? The work to be accomplished was something more than suppressing the insurrection of a single wicked community, state or nation. It was nothing less than restoring the disturbed equilibrium of the moral universe; resisting and restraining within due bounds the combined armies of hell; overcoming the gigantic power of legions of devils; antagonizing and driving back the malign influence of falsity and evil which invaded the souls of men, and threatened to destroy their power of discerning and their liberty of choosing between good and evil.

And surely no finite, human, or merely delegated power was adequate to a work like this. Nothing less than the arm of Omnipotence was equal to such a task. "Therefore," as saith the prophet Isaiah, "his own arm brought salvation unto Him, and his righteousness, it sustained Him." The Heavenly Father, forever watchful over the welfare of his children, veiled Himself with our infirm humanity borne down with its accumulated weight of evil; for in what other conceivable way could He have met and overcome the influence of the hells, but by placing Himself in a condition to be approached and assailed by them? He must descend

* For some of this testimony, see "The World Beyond," by Rev. John Doughty (forming No. 1 of the "Popular Series"), Chap. V., on HEAVEN.

to the devils' place of sojourn—to the citadel which they threatened. Spiritually regarded, the human race were enslaved—were in bondage to infernal spirits; and the Lord assumed humanity for the purpose of releasing them from that bondage. He came to break their fetters and “let the oppressed go free.” The redemption He wrought was purely spiritual. It was a redemption from the overmastering power of the hells, and the consequent restoration to mankind of their original freedom to think and will as of themselves; the restoration of their ability to see or think what is true, and their freedom to will and do what they see to be right.

Thus redemption is seen to be purely God's own work. It is not salvation, for this requires the co-operation of man; yet without the redemption wrought by God in the person of Jesus Christ, no one henceforward could have been saved.

Such, briefly, is the New Church doctrine of redemption. It does not mar but illustrates the exceeding beauty and loveliness of the Divine character. It does not require for its acceptance the surrender or abnegation of our reason, but is quite in harmony with all its requirements. It will be found also, on careful examination, to be in perfect agreement with the whole spirit and tenor of Holy Scripture. The Bible reveals God as a merciful and loving Father; as becoming incarnate for human redemption—coming into the world and enduring the assaults of infernals for the purpose of releasing men from their spiritual thralldom, and making them truly free. “If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” The new doctrine also is in harmony with, while it helps us to understand the meaning of, many passages in the New Testament which speak of demoniacal possession, and of Christ's casting out the devils by his word. (See Matt. viii. 16, 31; ix. 32, 33; xii. 28; xvii. 18, 19; Mark i. 34; ix. 25, 26; xvi. 9; Luke iv. 35; xi. 20; xiii. 32.) The evil spirits could not—they never can—endure the Divine sphere. The light and warmth of the spiritual Sun are painful to them, and they flee from it. (See Mark i. 23–26; Luke iv. 33–35.) And this shows us *how* the Lord, by his advent in the flesh, restored the equilibrium between heaven and hell, by so resisting and keeping within due bounds the sphere of the latter, as to maintain man's freedom and rationality unimpaired.

Redemption, then, according to the New Theology, was a purely divine work, wrought by God himself in the spiritual realm. It consisted in overcoming the gigantic power and threatened prepon-

derance of the hells, by bringing the Divine life nearer to them—bringing it down through the humanity assumed, and thus conquering them, or compelling their retreat, as creatures of the night are compelled to retire to their dens when the light of day appears. And the Heavenly Father himself, and not any *second person* in the Trinity, is declared to be the Redeemer.

And the effect of the redemption wrought by God in Christ, was to preserve mankind in a state of mental and moral freedom; so that, “being delivered from the hands of our enemies, we *may* [if we choose] serve Him without fear.” This is what it has actually accomplished for the human race: it has overcome the influence of hell to such a degree, that men need not now be its slaves unless they freely *choose* such bondage. Through the redemption that has been wrought, mankind are now able to understand the will of God, or the truth that reveals his will to them, and are free to serve Him if they choose—free to make their own election. This redemption does not confer or insure salvation, but simply places it within every one’s reach, and leaves him free to choose and able to act according to his choice.

VII.—*SALVATION.*

The prevailing belief among Christians respecting salvation at the time Swedenborg wrote, was, that it is deliverance from hell and its miseries, and the qualification for heaven and its joys; that this deliverance and qualification for heaven may take place suddenly—in the twinkling of an eye; that it is wrought by an act of immediate Divine mercy, and without any regard to the inner life or character of its subjects—provided they have faith.

With this idea the teachings of the New Church are everywhere and perpetually at war. According to these teachings salvation is a thing of degrees—a certain advanced spiritual state—a more or less perfect, orderly and healthy condition of the human soul. A man is saved in the degree that his natural hereditary and selfish propensities are brought into subjection and due subordination to the higher and truly human faculties, and the Divine Wisdom and Love are so enthroned within him that he finds his chief delight in learning and doing the will of the Lord. So that the higher his wisdom and the purer his love, that is, the more closely he is conjoined to the Lord through a life of obedience to revealed truth, so much the

more orderly and healthy is his soul, so much the more blissful his state, and in so much higher degree, therefore, is he saved.

And this blessed, orderly or saved state, is not one to be instantaneously or suddenly attained. It is reached only through a long and brave conflict with the selfish propensities of the natural man—the foes of each one's own household. It is a state that one grows into gradually, as we grow from infancy to manhood, from a state of ignorance to one of intelligence. The means by which this state is reached, or salvation achieved, are the natural and spiritual truths we learn, our trials and disappointments, our joys and sorrows, our successes and defeats, our relations and intercourse with others, and all the varied discipline of life. By these means the all-loving and merciful One is perpetually working through all our lives, to recreate us in his own Divine likeness, and so to save us with an everlasting salvation—to fill us with his own Spirit and Life. And his life flows into us just in the degree that we deny, overcome, and *lose* our own hereditary selfish life for his sake; for in that degree we receive or *find* our true life, agreeably to the Lord's own words: "He that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it;" that is, he shall find a new life far superior and more blissful than the old selfish life he has lost. And the only sure way of attaining this new life, which is the salvation (in different degrees) that the Bible speaks of, is, by shunning all known evils as sins against God.

"To be led away from evils, to be regenerated and thus to be saved," says Swedenborg, "is of mercy which is not immediate, as is believed, but mediate, that is, to those who recede from evils, and thereby admit the truth of faith and the good of love from the Lord into their life. Immediate mercy, or that which would extend to every one from the good pleasure alone of God, is contrary to divine order; and what is contrary to divine order is contrary to God, for order is from God, and his Divine in heaven is order. For any one to receive order in himself is to be saved, which is effected solely by living according to the precepts of the Lord." (A. C. 10, 659.)

"Instantaneous reformation and consequent salvation would be comparatively like the instantaneous conversion of an owl into a dove and of a serpent into a sheep. . . . It is evident that all who think of salvation from *life*, think of no instantaneous salvation by immediate mercy, but of the means of salvation in which and through which the Lord operates according to the laws of his Divine Providence; that is, through which man is led by the Lord out of pure mercy. . . . Instantaneous salvation out of immediate mercy, is the fiery flying serpent in the church." (D. P. 338, '40.)

"Salvation comes from the life which a man has procured for

himself in the world by the knowledges of faith. This life remains ; whereas all thought which does not agree with a man's life, perishes and becomes as if it had never existed. Heavenly consociations are formed according to the kinds of life, and by no means according to the kinds of thought which are not in agreement with the life." (A. C. n. 2228.)

VIII.—*THE DOCTRINE OF THE CROSS.*

By most Christians—by all, indeed, who have assumed the title of “evangelical”—the doctrine of the Cross is esteemed the most precious and vital of all the doctrines of Christianity. There is no other doctrine so much dwelt upon by the religious press, so often introduced into pulpit discourses, or so strongly emphasized by teaching ministers, as this. But the doctrine as commonly held and taught, is not the true doctrine—far from it. It is the doctrine of vicarious sacrifice—the doctrine of “substitution”—interpreted to mean, that the physical agony which Christ endured on the cross was the price of redemption, the penalty demanded by an angry God as the sole condition of pardon and forgiveness of sin ; and that all who accept this doctrine, do thereby have their sins blotted out, and receive the Divine forgiveness through the merits of Christ's sufferings and death.

The doctrine as thus interpreted, is seen to be purely naturalistic. There is nothing spiritual in it, and nothing that helps us spiritually. It is suited to the apprehension of the merely natural man ; and we can easily understand why it is held to so tenaciously and prized so highly, and why those who have once confirmed themselves in it, find its rejection so difficult, and the bare thought of such a thing so terrible. For the denial of this doctrine (as they have received and understood it), deprives them of the hope of salvation—leaves their heavy debt of sin unsatisfied, its penalty unpaid, their pardon unsecured. No wonder, therefore, that it is a hard doctrine to get rid of when once accepted and confirmed.

The New Doctrine on this Subject.

What, now, is the New Church doctrine on the subject ? According to its teachings, the passion of the Cross was the consummation of that stupendous series of spiritual conflicts whereby the Lord subdued the hells, wrought deliverance for man by restoring the

equilibrium of the moral universe, and glorified the humanity He assumed. It was the final and combined assault of the infernals upon the Prince of peace—the last and crowning act in the sublime work of redemption and glorification.

And thus the Cross becomes a symbol full of heavenly—yea, of divine significance. It symbolizes those spiritual conflicts—conflicts between heaven and hell in the soul, or between the spiritual and the natural man—which every one who enters the kingdom of heaven by being born from Above, is called to endure. This inward conflict between good and evil, is spiritual temptation. It is the battle of the Lord, sometimes fierce and desperate—always more or less painful to the soul of him who engages in it. But it is indispensable to the soul's purification and complete development—indispensable to the unfolding of the highest and noblest life, or to the final victory of the spiritual over the natural man—inseparable from and indispensable to our regeneration. It is the spiritual warfare of which Paul speaks, and which every regenerating soul must endure—a warfare needful to the purifying and strengthening of the soul, and necessary, therefore, to its entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

From this we may learn what is the true meaning of taking up the cross, and why the Lord says: "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me;" and "if any one will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." When we see and acknowledge our evils, and strive, with the Lord's help, to overcome them, or to bring them into complete subjection to the revealed laws of our higher or heavenly life, we are doing the very thing which is signified in the spiritual sense by "taking up our cross." And as it was in this way that the Lord overcame the hells which infested his assumed humanity, and so made that humanity Divine, we are really and in the true sense "following" Him, when we thus deny self and take up our cross.

Thus the doctrine of the Cross, as held and taught in the New Church, is at once rational and spiritual, and eminently practical. It involves the doctrine of Christ's glorification, and of our regeneration, which is its image and likeness. It involves, further, the doctrine of our entire dependence on the Lord for strength to overcome our evils, as well as for wisdom to engage in the conflict therewith. Rightly understood, therefore, and practically viewed, this doctrine is seen to be one of supreme importance.

“By taking up the cross,” says Swedenborg, “is meant to undergo temptations.” (Ap. Ex. 893.) And spiritual temptations are conflicts between good and evil, or heaven and hell in the soul. “The Lord while in the world and in his human there, did, of his own proper ability, sustain and overcome all temptations; differing in this from every man, who in no case sustains and overcomes any temptation of his own proper ability, but from that of the Lord in him. . . . In spiritual temptations there is a dispute as to dominion, or as to which shall have the supremacy, the internal or the external, or what is the same, the spiritual or the natural man—these being entirely opposite to each other. When man is in temptations, his internal or spiritual man is under the Lord’s rule by means of angels, but his external or natural man is under the rule of infernal spirits; and the combat between them is what is perceived in man as temptation.” (A. C. n. 3927.)

“The ends to which temptations are conducive are these: They gain for good dominion over evil, and for truth, dominion over the false; they confirm truths in the mind, and conjoin them to good; and they disperse evils and the falsities thence derived. They serve also to open the internal spiritual man, and to bring the natural into subjection to it; to destroy the loves of self and the world, and to subdue the lusts which proceed from them.” (N. J. D. n. 194.)

“Regeneration has this for its end: that the life of the old man may die, and the new life which is celestial may revive or be established. Hence it may be seen that there must at all events be conflict; for the life of the old man resists, nor is it willing to be extinguished; and the life of the new man cannot enter unless where the life of the old is extinct. . . .

“He who thinks from an enlightened rational principle, may see from this that man cannot be regenerated without combat, that is, without spiritual temptations; and further, that he is not regenerated by one temptation, but by many; for there are many kinds of evil which constituted the delight of his former life, that is, the old life; and all these evils cannot be subdued at once and together, for they inhere tenaciously, since they were rooted in the parents for many ages back, and hence are become innate in man, and confirmed by actual evils of his own from childhood; all of which evils are diametrically opposite to celestial good which is to be insinuated and to constitute the new life.” (A. C. n. 8403.)

IX.—*THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.*

“Salvation by the blood of Christ,” is an expression often on the lips of Christian teachers; and has been of frequent occurrence in their writings for many centuries. And there is ample warrant for this in the New Testament. The Apostle John says: “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin;” and that He “washes us from our

sins in his own blood." And Paul speaks of being "justified by his blood," and says, "we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins through his blood." This language has given rise to much controversy among Christians. But all the strife has arisen from a too literal interpretation of it.

What spiritual thing, then, does the blood of Christ symbolize or stand for? When this is known, it is easy to understand the meaning of being washed, cleansed, redeemed and saved by his blood.

The New Church gives a rational and intelligible answer to this question. It says that blood, which is the means of nourishing and vitalizing the body, is the symbol of that living truth by means of which the human soul is nourished and vitalized. Christ's blood, therefore, stands for the spirit and principles of his religion—for those high and holy truths contained in his Word, and of which He was Himself the very incarnation. This is what his blood corresponds to and signifies. To be cleansed and saved by the blood of Christ, therefore, is to be spiritually washed and saved; is to have our souls cleansed of their impure thoughts and evil desires by means of that divine-human truth symbolized by his blood—the truth which He Himself taught and lived and glorified, and thus accommodated to the needs of every human being.

When we heartily receive into our understanding any divine truth, and by means of it fight against and overcome some evil within us which that truth reveals, we are so far washed and cleansed by that truth—washed and cleansed by the blood of Christ, according to the spiritual and true meaning of this expression. And while we are doing this—cleansing our souls of their false persuasions and evil loves—we are at the same time building up a pure and virtuous character; or, what is the same, we are receiving into our hearts the good of that celestial love which is the very soul and substance of truth. And this good of love is what Christ's *flesh* corresponds to and signifies.

From this brief explanation of these divine symbols, we may understand what it is to eat Christ's flesh and drink his blood. It is to receive into our understandings the heavenly truths which He taught and lived, and to so apply those truths to life, that we shall receive into our hearts the good of that unselfish love which is the substance and body of these truths. In short, it is to receive and have our souls fed and nourished by Christ's own unselfish life, which is the highest or heavenly life—the only true and eternal life.

And from this we may understand what Jesus meant when He called Himself “the living bread” from heaven, and said: “He that eateth me, even he shall live by me;” also when He said: “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him;” and “except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” For we have no true spiritual life, and can have none, except as we receive heavenly truth (the blood of the Lamb) into our understandings, and, through the faithful application of that truth to life, receive into our hearts the good of that unselfish love which is the life and soul of truth.

This is a condensed statement of what the New Church teaches on this subject. To quote a single and brief passage from Swedenborg by way of confirmation:

“Since all spiritual and celestial things relate solely to good and truth, it follows that flesh means the good of charity, and blood the truth of faith; and in the supreme sense the Lord as to the divine good of love and the divine truth of wisdom. . . . It is known that the Lord is the Word; and there are two principles to which all things in the Word relate, Divine Good and Divine Truth. Therefore if the Word is substituted for the Lord, it is plain that these two principles are meant by his flesh and blood.” (T. C. R. 706.)

X.—“*THE END OF THE WORLD.*”

The generally accepted belief among Christians at the time Swedenborg wrote (and the belief is still quite prevalent), was, that this natural world with all its appurtenances is one day to be utterly destroyed; the earth to be burned up; the sun, moon and stars to be extinguished, and the wheels of time to cease revolving; that the hosts of human beings who have lived and died since the dawn of creation, would then be resurrected and summoned to judgment; and that this would be “the end of the world.”

This doctrine is so unreasonable as to render unnecessary anything like a serious refutation. It involves such a manifest departure from all the known laws of order, progress, preservation and reproduction, as well as of Divine wisdom and beneficence, as to render it utterly incredible to every thoughtful and reflecting mind. It doubtless had its origin in the mistranslation of the Greek phrase *ἡ συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος* (*he suntelcia tou aiōnos*), and the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the symbolic language of the New Testament, especially of that which speaks of the passing away of the former

heaven and earth, of the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars—all of which language as interpreted by the rule of correspondence revealed for the New Church, yields a perfectly rational and consistent meaning. Every Greek scholar knows that *Αἰών* (*aiōn*) does not mean *world*, as rendered in our common English version, but *an age, a life, any full period* from beginning to end. And *συντέλεια* means the *consummation, end or completion* of that age or period. So that this Greek phrase correctly rendered into English, would read, “the consummation of the Age,” and not “the end of the world” as in our common version.

And what is to be understood by “the consummation of the Age”? According to the teaching of the New Church, this phrase refers to the first Christian Age and its consummation, or to the end of the first Christian Church, when also a new Age and Church were to commence. History records several different Ages—as the Golden, the Silver and the Copper Ages—each of which has passed away or been consummated. In general, the period during which any particular system of opinions, either political, social, philosophical or religious, bear sway over the minds of men, is denominated an Age. And when the sway of such opinions is loosened or destroyed, that Age is consummated. When, therefore, our Lord foretold a “consummation of the Age,” what else could He refer to but the end or consummation of that church which had just commenced, and which we call the first Christian church?—for all his words, rightly interpreted, have reference to the spiritual things of heaven and the church. And when the truths and goods of heaven are no longer received by the men of the church, but falsities and evils instead, then its vitality is gone—the essential things of the church are no longer there. That church is at an end.

By the end of the church, or the consummation of the Age, therefore, is meant its spiritual consummation, the loss of genuine charity and faith which are the essential things of the church, and not the abandonment of its places and forms of worship, its rites and ordinances, or any of the externals of religion. When the leading doctrines of Christianity—doctrines concerning the Lord, the Atonement, the Sacred Scripture, Redemption, Regeneration, the Resurrection, Heaven and Hell—have become so misunderstood and falsified that they darken rather than enlighten the human understanding; and when, reading the Scriptures under the influence of

such darkening doctrines, people no longer receive therefrom genuine truth but truth falsified ; and when the internal states or ruling loves of the church are consequently as evil as its accepted dogmas are false, then the church is consummated. And we submit to every thoughtful mind that nothing less than a new Revelation from God out of heaven could then be expected, for nothing less would be adequate to the removal of such falsities and evils, and the consequent inauguration of a new Age or Church.

And according to the teachings of the New Theology, such consummation of the first Christian Age or Church was reached about the middle of the last century (1757) ; when also a general judgment was executed in the spiritual world upon the vast multitude of spirits who had been congregating in the intermediate realm since the time of the Lord's advent in the flesh. Being alike in externals, they were kept together in that realm for a long time, and formed there a kind of heaven for themselves. It was not a true but only an imaginary heaven—the heaven in which there was “war” between Michael and the Dragon (Rev. xii. 7),—the “first heaven” which passed away (Rev. xxi. 1) as the judgment was executed on its denizens. That judgment occurred as one of the normal results of a new and more powerful influx of truth from the Lord into the minds and hearts of those there, thus revealing and judging their interior quality ; and as this was found to be quite different and even opposite—that of some being good, and that of others evil—when their interiors were fully disclosed a separation took place by force of the law of spiritual attraction and repulsion. The good were elevated to congenial societies in heaven, and the evil passed into hell—each to the society determined by his own character or ruling love. Thus things were reduced to order in the spiritual realm ; the dense clouds of falsity which had been so long gathering in the world of spirits, shutting out the light of the spiritual Sun and producing such spiritual darkness in the church on earth, were dispersed ; and straightway there began to be a freer, more interior, and more universal influx of divine truth and good into the minds of men on earth. The old Age was consummated, and the first Christian dispensation had come to its end, according to Divine prediction ; and a new Age was inaugurated and a new Christian dispensation commenced ;—an Age which was to be characterized by greater freedom of thought on all subjects pertaining to religion and

the church, and by a consequent higher degree of spiritual enlightenment. Accordingly Swedenborg says :

“The state of the world and of the church before the last judgment, was as evening and night ; but after it, as morning and day.

“After the last judgment was accomplished, there was joy in heaven and light also in the world of spirits such as was not before ; . . . because the infernal societies that had been interposed like clouds which darken the earth, were removed. A similar light also then arose in men in the world, giving them new enlightenment.”—Contin. L. J. n. 13, 30.

Such is a brief explanation of the doctrine held and taught by the New Church, concerning that event referred to by the passage in the New Testament mistranslated “the end of the world.” Of its reasonableness as compared with the old doctrine, it is needless to speak here. The candid reader will judge of that for himself. But if he will look at the state of the world and of the church at the present day, and compare it with what it was prior to 1757, he cannot resist the conclusion that we have actually entered upon a new Era, and that *some* such event as that described by Swedenborg must have occurred in the spiritual world—the realm of causes—about the middle of the last century. No other adequate and philosophical reason can be given for the astounding phenomena and the marvelous progress and developments,—scientific, industrial, moral and religious,—which have so conspicuously marked the period since 1757, the alleged date of the last general judgment.*

XI.—*THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD.*

In three of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), we have a prophetic announcement of another and then future coming or manifestation of the Son of Man, which it is said would be “in the clouds” or “the clouds of heaven.” And we read also in the Revelation : “Behold He cometh with clouds.” And in accordance with the sensuous philosophy and the literal method of interpretation which have prevailed in the church, Christians have generally expected that this prophecy would be fulfilled according to the sense

* For a fuller explanation of this subject, and for the evidence, both Scriptural and rational, of what is here affirmed, the reader is referred to *Lectures on the New Dispensation*, by the author, pp. 32–60.

of the letter. And repeatedly has the time been fixed when the Lord was expected to appear in person upon the natural clouds, visible to the natural eyes of men.

It is not strange that Christians should have misunderstood and misinterpreted this prophecy. It is precisely what might have been expected. For no divine prophecy was ever understood or correctly interpreted until *after* its fulfillment. How was it in regard to the prophecies concerning the Lord's first advent? The Jews were expecting the Messiah; for their Scriptures had foretold his advent? But so far were they from understanding the true import of the prophecies concerning Him—so little did they comprehend of the *spirit* of their Scriptures, and so closely did they stick to the *letter*, that when He came whose advent was foretold, his character and conduct were so different from what they had expected, that they refused to receive Him. They regarded and treated Him as an impostor,—condemned and crucified Him as a malefactor.

Seeing, then, how the Jewish church misunderstood the prophecies concerning Messiah's first advent, it were reasonable to expect that those relating to his second coming would be equally misunderstood by Christians. It were reasonable to expect that his promised second appearing would be in *some* form different from the general expectation;—so different, indeed, that He would not at first be generally recognized even by those who bear his name and are looking for his advent.

And yet the repeated caution to “watch” and “take heed” lest we be deceived in this matter, would seem to be of itself sufficient to have prevented Christians from expecting a literal fulfillment of the prophecy. And the reason assigned for this caution, is: “For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” Surely there were no need of cautioning people against being deceived, if the prophecy concerning his second coming were intended to be literally fulfilled; for in that case there were no opportunity for imposture. No one *could* so imitate this promised appearing of our Lord, *according to the sense of the letter*, as to deceive anybody. This caution, therefore, to take heed lest we be deceived and accept some false Christ for the true one, is itself proof that the Old doctrine on this subject cannot be the true one. It shows that his coming was not to be in a form addressed to the *outward* but to the *inward* sense—to the understanding, or

the mental eye. For, in respect to things addressed to the understanding, men are liable to be deceived. They are liable to be imposed upon—often have been—by pretended and spurious revelations. They are liable to accept falsity for truth. Hence the ground and reason for the divine exhortation to “watch” and “take heed” that we be not deceived.

The New Doctrine on this Subject.

Turning, now, from the Old doctrine which is alike unreasonable and unscriptural, let us see what the New Church teaches on this subject. Briefly stated, it is : That the promised second advent of the Lord, is a new and fuller revelation of Himself and of the great facts and laws of his heavenly kingdom, to the understandings and hearts of men ; a new and fuller unfolding of the deep and heavenly meaning of the Word which is from Him and is Himself ; a fresh and more powerful influx of his own light and life into all open, receptive and obedient souls, recreating them in his own Divine likeness, and gradually remoulding human society after a new and heavenly pattern. It is the beginning of a new Epoch—a new and majestic step in the Divine economy towards the fulfillment of the prayer, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, as in heaven so also upon earth.” The Scripture affords abundant evidence of the truth of this doctrine. For, consider :

1st. *Who is the Son of Man* whose advent is foretold ? This very inquiry was made of the Lord Himself when on earth ; and his answer was : “Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.” The Son of Man, then, is the *Light*—the light by which we are to be guided in the regulation of our thoughts, feelings, dispositions and conduct—the light of divine truth. Hence He is elsewhere called “the Light of life,” “the Light of the world,” “the true Light which lighteth every man ;” for He is the light of the moral universe, the Illuminator of all minds. He is also declared to be the *Logos* or Word which “was in the beginning with God, and was God,” and which, in the fulness of time, “became flesh, and dwelt among men ;” which means that He of whose second coming the Gospels speak, was the visible incarnation of the Divine Wisdom or Word. And when the seer of Patmos was “in the spirit,” and “saw heaven opened,” he beheld One “called Faithful and True,” seated upon a white horse and followed by the armies of heaven, having upon his head many

crowns, and written upon his vesture and on his thigh the title, “King of kings and Lord of lords;” and his special function was—the exclusive function of divine truth from the Word—“to judge in righteousness,” and “make war” against the beast and false prophet, or the combined forces of falsity and evil that are forever in battle-array against the truth and righteousness of the Most High. And, as if to leave no room for doubt as to who this “true and faithful” One might be, it is added: “And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God.”

The Son of Man, then, is the Word of God—the very Divine Wisdom or Truth. This is the plain testimony of Scripture. What, then, can the prophecy of his second coming mean, but the prophecy of a new and more powerful manifestation of the Divine Wisdom and Love to the understandings and hearts of men?—a new or second coming of the Word of God? And what can a new or second coming of the Word mean, but a new revelation of the deeper, even the heavenly, meaning of the Word?—a new disclosure of its real nature and its sacred mysteries, or of its interior divine glories?—an opening and revealing, to such as have eyes to see, of the sublime truths of its spiritual sense, and the correspondingly powerful operation of these truths in the renewal of the hearts and lives of men? Hence we may see why this promised second coming was to be “with power and great glory.”

But the prophecy assures us that He would be seen coming in or upon the *clouds*—according to Matthew, “in the clouds of heaven.” The term *clouds*, is not to be literally interpreted here. The science of correspondences reveals to us its true spiritual meaning as used in Scripture. As natural clouds conceal or render obscure the heavenly luminaries, they are, therefore, an appropriate symbol whereby to represent that which causes obscurity in the things of heaven and the church. And such obscurity is one of the consequences of that low mental state in which men are led to accept appearances for realities, and so to abide in the mere sensuous appearance of truth in the letter of Scripture. Thus the truths of the literal sense, as received and understood by the natural man, are what is meant by *clouds*. And when the deeper heavenly meaning, such as is contained in the spiritual sense of the Word, is disclosed, then the genuine truth is seen in or through the obscurity of the letter. And *thus* is fulfilled the prophecy of the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven.

And whoever has made himself acquainted with the general condition of the Christian Church at the time Swedenborg lived and wrote, knows that it had fallen into a very low and degraded state. It was thoroughly immersed in the things of sense. Its philosophy was sensuous; its doctrines were sensuous; its conceptions of heavenly realities and its methods of Biblical interpretation were altogether sensuous; and on nearly every subject connected with Christian theology, the minds of the great mass of professed believers and even teachers of the Gospel, were terribly beclouded. And although many and dark clouds still linger, we are not to look at the Christian Church as it is to-day, but as it was prior to the memorable year 1757, if we would learn how indispensable to the progress and welfare of humanity was this new opening of the Bible as to its heavenly meaning—this coming of the Word of God in its divine spirit and power. All the prophecies concerning the first Christian dispensation had been fulfilled, in their spiritual sense—including this also: “Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven.” For the kindling warmth of the Divine love, and the illumination of a genuine faith, and even the knowledges of divine and heavenly things, had been withdrawn, or rather *shut out* from the minds of Christians by the gigantic accumulation of falsity and evil.

But at this juncture, amid the dense clouds of ignorance and error and doubt and denial—generated by the inordinate loves of self and the world which had extinguished in human minds all the bright and heavenly luminaries—amid these dark encompassing clouds there comes a new and glorious light. A new Morning dawns. A new Age is ushered in by the influx of new life and the revelation of new and higher truth. From underneath the cloud of the letter—out from the living soul of Scripture—the Sun of righteousness arises with healing in his wings. And thus, to humble and open minds, the incarnate God comes and reveals Himself anew—comes with new power and glory in the clouds. Agreeable to his own prophetic declaration: “And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

And although the Church is not yet arrayed in her beautiful bridal robes, it is apparent to all eyes that a new Morning has broken upon the world. The light of the New Dispensation is gleaming all around us. Science, philosophy, literature, art,

politics, morals, and even religion, have begun to feel the influence of the Second Coming. The old forms of thought have greatly changed, and are still rapidly changing. Old, religious dogmas, old systems of philosophy, old theories of politics, old forms of government, old modes of education, old systems of medicine, old industrial processes, old methods of dispensing charity, old ideas on all subjects, are being everywhere summoned to judgment.

But these are external things, and illustrate but feebly the power and glory of the Second Coming. The grandest triumphs of the New Dispensation are not to be achieved in the outer world of matter, but in the inner world of mind. When the spiritual sense of God's Word really comes to us—that is, comes to be clearly perceived, acknowledged and *felt*—it searches the inner chambers of the soul as with a thousand candles of the Lord. It opens up the hitherto hidden depths of iniquity within us. It discloses the endless deceits and artifices and sinuosities of the unregenerate heart. It shows us our need of an almighty Saviour, and brings that Saviour very near. It shows us plainly of the Father; for it reveals, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the matchless and unspeakable love of God. It withdraws the veil that has so long hung over the spiritual world, and discloses the real nature of heaven and hell. It makes plain to every inquiring mind the great end for which we were created, and shows us beyond mistake the way in which that end is to be secured. It resolves the doubts of honest doubters in regard to the divinity and inspiration of the Scripture; reconciles all parts of it with each other and with enlightened reason; shows the perfect agreement between science and religion; and satisfies the severest demands of the intellect in regard to the Trinity, Atonement, Redemption, Resurrection, and other doctrines which, as based upon the literal teachings of the Bible and as commonly held and expounded, are known to be embarrassed with many and great difficulties. Truly does the spiritual sense of the Word come to the rational understanding “with power and great glory.”

And yet it is not *here* that its greatest power and glory are to be seen; not in its ability to clarify the intellect, or satisfy the demands of reason, but in its renovating influence upon the heart; in its cleansing and purifying efficacy; in its power to soften and subdue the natural man; to sweeten the temper; to refine the feelings; to purify the motives; to elevate the affections; to exalt and ennoble the purposes; to weaken the power of evil within us; to recreate

our inner man into somewhat of our Heavenly Father's likeness ; and so to build us up a living temple fit for the residence of God's Holy Spirit.

This, briefly, is the New doctrine concerning the Second Coming,—a doctrine at once Scriptural and rational, and whose wholesome *practical* tendency will not be denied. And under this New Dispensation, it is believed that a New Christian Church is to be built up, which will ultimately be like a city set upon a hill, that cannot be hid ;—a Church which will be filled with all sweet and gentle charities, conspicuous for all wise and philanthropic deeds, crowned with all noble and heavenly graces, “beautiful as a bride adorned for her husband.”

This New Church is shadowed forth in the Apocalypse under the image of the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. It is to be a truly catholic church, for its spirit is the all-embracing spirit of God's Word. Its platform is broad as the foundation of the angelic heavens. The divinity of the Lord, the divinity of the Word, and the necessity of a life according to the commandments—these are its fundamentals. Its essential and ruling spirit is love to the Lord and the neighbor ; and therefore it excludes from its communion and fellowship none who exhibit this spirit.

Such is the character of the Apocalyptic New Jerusalem, the blessed result and crowning glory of the Second Coming. Such the Church whose foundations are “all manner of precious stones,” having Jesus Christ Himself for “the head of the corner.” Such the Church, in whose early dawn it is believed we are even now living ; whose rising noon a remote posterity will rejoice in ; whose central light and life and perpetual inspiration is the Lord in his Divine Humanity ; and into which “there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie ; but they that are written in the Lamb's book of life.”

XII.—*THE SACRED SCRIPTURE.*

One of the distinguishing features of the New Theology, and that which gives color to the entire system, is the kind and degree of inspiration which it attributes to the Sacred Scripture, and the alleged peculiarity in the style of its composition. The New Church maintains its plenary divine inspiration, declaring it to be strictly.

and without qualification, the Word of God. Swedenborg says that the Bible was never meant to instruct mankind in natural science, or the laws of the material universe ; but that it was given to teach us concerning spiritual things ; such as the personality and character of God and our relation to Him ; the reality and nature of the spiritual world ; the capabilities and wants of the human soul, and the means by which its most perfect state and highest bliss are to be secured. Through the blinding influence of sin, man lost the knowledge of the things which it most deeply concerned him to know. He lost all knowledge of his inner and superior life—all perception of the laws, capabilities and undying needs of his own soul. It was this loss, therefore, which rendered a Divine Revelation necessary.

What else, then, but spiritual things—God, the soul, immortality, redemption, regeneration, retribution, sin, holiness, heaven and its blessedness, hell and its misery,—can the Bible, when rightly understood and interpreted, have been given to teach us? Yet we know that it treats or *appears* to treat much of natural and temporal things. We know that it abounds in the mention of times, places, persons, things, and events belonging to this natural world. But according to Swedenborg all these natural and temporal things are but symbols of something spiritual.* They all have a spiritual signification. So

* The doctrine, so much insisted on by Swedenborg, that the Bible is a book of Divine symbols, is recognized by many Biblical scholars and pious Christian authors. In an interesting article on “Symbols of Thought,” by the late Rev. E. E. Adams, D.D., we meet with such passages as the following :

“The Bible is a book of symbols,—not word-symbols only, but types, scenes, visions, and life-symbols. As a whole it expresses the love and wisdom and purpose of God.” “The Tabernacle was a symbol of God’s presence and dwelling place. The Temple, with all its varied, spacious, rich apartments, and its furniture, was a sublime symbol of heaven and its worship. The bondage of Israel, their release, their march through the Red Sea, their wanderings, their miraculous supply of manna from heaven, and of water from the smitten rock, their passage over Jordan and entrance into Canaan, prefigured, symbolized a grand spiritual history—the rise, progress and completeness of the Christian Church. Even the men of that age were living symbols of the God-man.” “The poetry of the Bible, indeed all poetry, is symbolic. Nature is made to express, by her fields, her forests, her mountains, seas, and rivers, sublime religious truths.” “The promise of Christ’s dominion over the nation is another of these divine symbols that embodies the history of ages.”—“The prophetic

that, within or above the apparent sense of Scripture, called also the natural or literal sense, he recognizes a higher meaning which he calls the internal or spiritual. This higher or spiritual sense, is to that of the letter, as the soul is to the body : and it dwells in every part of the written Word as the soul dwells in every part of the body. As the body without the soul is dead, so the literal sense of the Word apart from the spiritual, is dead also. As the body derives all its life and strength from the indwelling soul, so the literal sense of the Word receives its vitality and power from the spiritual sense. And as the body is the normal outbirth of the soul, and corresponds to it as an effect corresponds to its producing cause, so the literal sense of the Word is the normal outbirth of the spiritual, and corresponds to it in like manner. And as body and soul are united by correspondence, the one being filled, pervaded, and animated by the other, so the literal and spiritual senses of the Word are united in like manner—the former being the appropriate receptacle or Divine medium of the latter.

The idea of a spiritual sense in every part of the Scripture, was not original with Swedenborg. It was the generally received doctrine of the Primitive Church—believed and taught by Origen, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Jerome, Augustine, Pantænus, Tatian, Theophilus, Pamphilius, Clemens and Cyril of Alexandria, and nearly all the early Christian Fathers. And the same belief has been held by many eminent theologians ever since. Dr. Mosheim, speaking of the illustrious writers of the second century, says: “They *all* attributed a double sense to the words of Scripture; the one *obvious* and *literal*, the other *hidden* and *mysterious*, which lay concealed, as it were, under the veil of the outward letter.” But the Fathers had no recognized rule for eliciting the spiritual sense. Each one’s own fancy or spiritual perception was his only guide. A hundred different expositors, therefore, might give as many different expositions of the same text.

symbols of the Bible are, perhaps, most beautiful, sublime, and mysterious.” “The great Teacher employed symbols, because He could thereby more fully convey his thoughts to men . . . The apostles do not, in their epistles, imitate our Lord, but they do expound and apply the Old Testament symbols.” —*Presbyterian Quarterly Review* for April, 1862.

The Key for Opening the Scriptures.

But the key to the deeper and heavenly meaning of Scripture has now been revealed (so it is believed and claimed), for the use of all who desire to see and to feast their souls on the abundant riches of God's Word. This key is the science or doctrine of correspondence—the fixed and unalterable relation existing between the spiritual and the natural, or between the internal and external. This doctrine is not, as some suppose, a pretty conceit or mere human invention, but has its foundation in the very constitution of things, and is exact as the science of mathematics. This is the grand key for opening the spiritual and true meaning of the Bible. And every one who is sufficiently familiar with this key, may apply it for himself. A hundred different expositors, therefore, equally skilled in the use of the key, will arrive at substantially the same spiritual sense of any given text; just as a hundred different translators, equally versed in the original languages of the Bible, will give substantially the same rendering of the same text. So that there is little room for the play of one's fancy. Fancy may, indeed, provide the dress for the spiritual sense. It may array it in apparel more or less beautiful and attractive. But it has as little to do with the substance of that sense as it has with the rendering of Greek or Hebrew into English, or with the results of a chemical experiment.

According to the teaching of the New Church, then, the Scripture is divine throughout; divine to the very ultimates; divine in its structure as well as in its substance. It differs from all human productions in the style of its composition, as well as in the nature of its contents. It infinitely transcends them all, as the works of God infinitely transcend the works of man. And as in nature the greatest wonders are not obvious at first view—lie never upon the outside—but the farther we penetrate into the interior structure of God's works, the more wonderful and perfect do we find them, so precisely is it with the written Word.

According to this teaching, therefore, God's Word is literally what the apostle declares all inspired Scripture to be—*theopneustos*—*God-breathed*. It is so constructed that the Divine can dwell in it in all fullness, as in seeds and germs and all things else in the realms of Nature. It is this, pre-eminently, which stamps it with the impress of Divinity. It is this which makes it God's Word, and a Divine medium of man's conjunction with his Maker. It is this which gives

it its quickening and transforming power—a power over the human heart which no uninspired word, no utterance of human wit or wisdom however exalted, ever had or ever can have.

Illustrations and Confirmations.

But although the Word is spiritual in its nature, being given exclusively for man's spiritual edification—although it contains a spiritual sense throughout, the New Church does not believe or teach that only those who accept this doctrine and who understand the science of correspondence, can receive spiritual instruction from the Word. Swedenborg teaches nothing of this sort. On the contrary, he teaches that the spiritual meaning of many parts of the Word—and these the *most essential* parts—is sufficiently obvious to all minds. The cloud of the letter in many places is so thin, that the light of the spiritual sense shines through. Thus he says :

“The Word in its literal sense is like a man clothed, whose face and hands are naked. Everything in the Word *necessary* to a man's faith and life and also to his salvation, is naked ; but the rest is clothed ; and in many places where it is clothed, it [the genuine spiritual truth] is visible through the clothing, as objects are seen through a veil of thin silk.” (D. S. S. n. 229.)

Thus all have an intuitive perception of the correspondence and spiritual signification of many things. Consequently all have a perception of the spiritual meaning of many portions of the Divine Word.

For example : When our Saviour says : “I am the light of the world,” Christians generally do not think of natural light, but of that to which the natural corresponds—the light of divine truth. When He says : “I am that bread of life,” most Christians perceive that He is speaking of spiritual bread and spiritual life—the correspondents of the natural. When He says : “He that eateth me, even he shall live by me,” few understand Him to speak of natural eating or living, but nearly every one thinks of the spiritual things to which such natural acts correspond. When He says : “If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink,” what Christian thinks of natural thirst or natural drinking, or of any movement of the body through natural space ? Nearly every one thinks of the soul's thirst for the water of life, which only He can slake who is the Fountain of living waters,—the very thing signified, according to the revealed law of correspondence. When He says : “He that

eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him," probably very few think of material flesh and blood, or of natural eating and drinking, but of the Lord's own truth and love—his divine-human virtues and graces, and their reception or incorporation into the spirit's life. When He says: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," do not all Christians perceive that He refers to a spiritual birth, a spiritual kingdom, and spiritual seeing? Yes—and that He means by man, not the material and perishable, but the substantial and immortal part—the soul or spirit which is the real man? And when (as in the Apocalypse) the Holy City New Jerusalem is spoken of as "coming down from God out of heaven," probably not many Christians nowadays think of the descent through actual space of any such city as is described in the literal sense. Most persons perceive that something spiritual and heavenly is there referred to, though they may not see precisely what it is.

All, therefore, have a pretty clear perception of the correspondence of some things, and consequently have some perception of the spiritual sense of God's Word. And the measure of that perception with each one will depend on the purity of his heart and the innocence of his life, or on the sincerity and strength of his desire to know, and his purpose to do, the will of the Heavenly Father.*

XIII.—*APPARENT AND REAL TRUTHS OF SCRIPTURE.*

The Volume of Revelation, like the volume of nature, abounds in the mere *appearances* of truth. These are very different from the real truths which underlie such appearances, and which require for their discernment the faithful exercise of our best faculties. The most unreasonable and absurd doctrines find some support from the letter of Scripture interpreted without the light of reason, or in the way the natural man is ever inclined to interpret it. All the numer-

* For evidence, both rational and Scriptural, of the *truth* of the New Church doctrine, briefly outlined here, the reader is referred to an exhaustive treatise on "The Science of Correspondences elucidated," by Rev. Edward Madeley; also to "The Plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures," by Rev. S. Noble; "The Bible: its true character and spiritual meaning," by Rev. L. P. Mercer (being No. 4 of this series): and to Lectures iv., v., vi. and vii. of Barrett's "Lectures on the New Dispensation."

ous errors and corruptions which have crept into the church, have sprung from a too literal interpretation of Scripture, or from neglecting to exercise the reason and understanding, and so failing to discover its spirit, or the deeper meaning which lies wrapped up in the letter. Accordingly Swedenborg—after telling us that there is a correspondence between natural and spiritual things, like that between body and soul, and that the Sacred Scripture contains a spiritual as well as a natural sense throughout, which cannot be discerned without the exercise of the rational understanding—says :

“ Now since the Word [or Sacred Scripture] is of such a nature, the appearances of truth, which are truths clothed, *may* be taken for naked truths ; and such appearances when confirmed, become falsities. Yet this is done by those who believe themselves to be superior to others in wisdom, when yet they are not wise ; for wisdom consists in seeing whether a thing be true before it is confirmed, but not in confirming whatever one pleases. . . . The former is the case with those who love truths and are affected by them because they are truths, and who apply them to the purposes of life. Such persons are enlightened of the Lord, and see truths by the light of truth.

“ All the heresies which ever did or do still exist in Christendom, have sprung from this circumstance ; that men have taken appearances of truth [such as are found in the letter of the Word] for genuine truths, and as such have confirmed them. . . . And when a man has confirmed himself in what is false, it is as if he had sworn to maintain it ; especially if self-love or the pride of his own understanding be engaged in its favor.” (D. S. S. 91, 92.)

It is known to all who read the Bible, that the dispositions, feelings and passions of unregenerate men, are not unfrequently attributed to God in the letter of Scripture. He is said to be angry, jealous and revengeful ; to hate, punish, tempt and cast into hell. And such is the *apparent* but not the real truth. The real truth is quite the reverse of this appearance. It is, that God is love, mercy and forgiveness, and that He cannot hate or punish any one. The reason that He sometimes *appears* to be and to do as the letter represents, is because of the anger, hatred, revenge and the like, in unregenerate hearts ; for every one sees God from and according to his own state. His appearance, therefore, is in perfect correspondence with the states of those to whom He essays to reveal Himself. To the supremely selfish heart the Divine Being must ever appear the opposite of what He really is. The appearance is a true appearance, resulting from the opposite state in and from which He is viewed.

We have in the realm of nature many such appearances of truth, which are very different from the real truth. Yet we continue to speak according to the appearance, even after it is known that the language we employ does not express the real but only the apparent truth. For example, we say that the sun *rises* in the morning and *goes down* in the evening. Yet we know that this is a fallacy; and that such language, literally interpreted, conveys an idea quite foreign to the real truth. Our reason, along with our knowledge of the solar system, enables us to correct this sensuous appearance, and to see that this apparent upward and downward movement of the sun is caused by our own and not by the sun's motion—that is, by the diurnal revolution of the earth on its axis.

And the universe is full of such fallacious appearances, which are gradually dissipated as the knowledge of its laws increases. But this can be effected only through the faithful exercise of the reason that God has given us. And why should there not be the same fallacious appearances in the Word as in the works of God?—appearances that can only be dissipated by an increase of spiritual knowledge, or a better understanding of spiritual laws, which may be gained from revelation and the faithful exercise of our higher reason.

XIV.—RELIGION.

What is religion? Few subjects, perhaps, have been more misunderstood, even by professing Christians, than this. Some have supposed it to consist in oral prayers and penitential sighs; others, in certain rites and ceremonies solemnly and reverently performed at stated times; others, in fastings, flagellations, and other bodily sufferings, either self-inflicted or imposed by ecclesiastical authority; others, in indiscriminate alms-giving and liberal endowments of religious institutions; others, in a certain system of religious belief, and a certain form of religious worship; others, in retiring from the world, renouncing its pleasures, cares and pursuits, and giving one's self up to a ceaseless round of solemn services.

But very different from all this is the teaching of the New Church respecting religion. Our illumined expositor says: "All religion has relation to life; and the life of religion is to do good." (D. Life, n. 1.) And throughout his writings he teaches that the true religion—while not rejecting forms and ordinances and external

worship, but using them as a means of its development and growth—consists essentially in *righteousness of life*, in doing justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with God. He insists that the truly religious life is the life of God in the soul of man, manifesting itself in all the transactions and relations of life; and that this life is best developed, not in the cloister nor away from the business and turmoil of the world, but in the midst of its cares, duties, temptations and trials; that we become more and more religious in the true sense of this word, in the degree that we look to the Lord for light and guidance, and endeavor to perform all our duties honestly and well as He would have us;—try to carry a self-denying, righteous and loving spirit into all the common labors and trials and transactions of life. Performing all our common every-day duties faithfully, honestly, conscientiously, and in the spirit of true neighborly love—at the same time inwardly and humbly acknowledging that it is the Lord who gives us the power and the disposition thus to live and act—this, according to the belief and teaching of the New Church, is living a religious life. This is the true religion—the religion of heaven itself.

The following are some of the things which Swedenborg says he learned on this subject from his intercourse with spirits in the other world :

“ I have been permitted to converse with some in the other life, who had withdrawn themselves from the business of the world, that they might live a pious and holy life; and with others also who had afflicted themselves in various ways, because they imagined that this was to renounce the world and to subdue the lusts of the flesh. But the greater portion of them,—having by such austerities contracted a sorrowful life, and removed themselves from the life of charity which can only be lived in the world,—cannot be associated with angels, because the life of the angels is one of gladness resulting from bliss, and consists in performing deeds of goodness which are works of charity.

“ Besides, they who have led a life withdrawn from worldly affairs, are possessed with the idea of their own merit; and are thence continually desirous of being admitted into heaven, and think of heavenly joy as a reward, being totally ignorant of what heavenly joy is. And when they are admitted among the angels, and to a perception of their joy, which is without the thought of merit, and consists in active duties and services openly performed, and in the blessedness arising from the good which they thereby promote, they are astonished, like persons who witness things altogether foreign to their expectation. And because they are not receptive

of that joy, they depart and associate with spirits like themselves, who have lived a similar life in the world. . . .

“These statements are made in order that it may be known, that the life which leads to heaven is not a life of retirement from the world, but of action in the world; and that a life of piety, without a life of charity, which can only be acquired in the world, does not lead to heaven, but a life of charity does; and this consists in acting sincerely and justly in every occupation, in every transaction, and in every work, from an interior and thus from a heavenly origin; and such origin is inherent in such a life when a man acts sincerely and justly, because it is according to the Divine laws. Such a life is not difficult; but a life of piety separate from a life of charity, is difficult; yet this life leads away from heaven, as much as it is believed to lead to it.” (H. H. n. 535.)

The Essential Thing in Religion.

The New Church believes and teaches that love to the Lord and the neighbor is the essential thing in heaven and the church; that the degree of heavenly life, and consequent happiness, in any individual, depends on the degree in which this love is developed or received (for man is only a recipient subject), and the measure of its intensity. Love is life; and the stronger and more disinterested the love, the nobler and more exalted is the life—the nearer does the individual approach to the moral likeness of God himself, and the sweeter and more abundant his spiritual joy.

The great end of all God's dealings with us—the end of all his chastisements as well as his blessings—the end for which He reveals to us the laws of the soul's higher life—is, to develop within us a heavenly character—a pure and unselfish love;—to re-create us in his own Divine likeness. Truth, indeed, is important, but only as a *means* to this great end; and the higher and purer the truth we accept, the higher and more blessed the state of life to which we may attain—*shall* attain if we religiously obey the truth.

But religious truth, according to the teachings of the New Church—no matter how pure, exalted, or abundant it be—is of no advantage to the receiver, unless he make it the means of restraining and overcoming in himself his selfish and infernal propensities, and developing the higher and nobler life: and this he does only by faithfully *living* or *doing* the truth—following whithersoever it points the way, and shunning, as a sin against God, whatever evil the truth condemns. Hundreds of passages confirmatory of this, might be quoted from the writings of Swedenborg; but three or four brief extracts

will serve for illustration. Bear in mind that every one's *character* is according to the state of his heart or the nature of his dominant love—the ruling purpose of his life.

“Charity constitutes the church, and not faith separate from charity.” (A. C. n. 3121. See also n. 809, 916, 1798, 1799, 1834, 1844, 2190, 2228, 2442.) And “Genuine charity is to believe in the Lord, and to act justly and rightly in every employment and office. That man, therefore, who from the Lord loves justice and practices it with judgment, is charity in its image and likeness.” (T. C. R. n. 449.)

“Every man's character is known from his [dominant] love; for love is the *esse* of every one's life, the veriest life itself deriving its existence from it. The man, therefore, is such as is the nature of the love which rules in him. If it be the love of self and the world, and consequently of revenge, hatred, cruelty, adultery, and the like, the man as to his spirit, or the interior man that lives after death, is a devil, whatever be his outward appearance. But if his prevailing love be the love of God and the neighbor, and consequently the love of goodness and truth, also of justice and honesty, he, whatever be his outward appearance, is an angel as to his spirit that lives after death.” (A. C. n. 6872. See also n. 379, 33, 10,284. Ap. Ex. n. 251.)

“It is of no advantage to a man to know much unless he *lives according to what he knows*. For knowledge has no other end than goodness; and he who is made good [that is, pure and unselfish in his character] is in possession of a far richer treasure than he whose knowledge is the most extensive, and yet is destitute of goodness; for what the latter is seeking by his great acquirements, the former already possesses. . . . They who know little, but have a conscience [or who follow the little light they have], become enlightened in the other world even so as to become angels; and then their wisdom and intelligence are inexpressible.” (A. C. n. 1100.)

A man's character, therefore, or his spiritual nearness to God, depends not so much on what he understands, thinks or *believes*, as on the kind and degree of his love—the state of his heart, or *the ruling purpose of his life*; and this, again, depends on the measure of his fidelity to duty, or the degree of his obedience to all known truth.

So often is the supreme importance of *right living*, or *religious obedience to all the known laws of heavenly charity*, insisted on by Swedenborg, and the relative insignificance of everything else, that it would be easy to fill a volume with passages similar to those here cited.

Reason in Religion.

Prior to Swedenborg's time, it was an established tenet in all the churches of Christendom, that religious doctrines were not to be scrutinized by the eye of reason; that they (some of them at least) were profound mysteries which people must not expect to understand, and should not, therefore, "pry into;" that they were to be accepted blindly, not rationally; that, in such matters the understanding was to be held in complete subjection to faith. And there was good reason for this; for the generally accepted beliefs of that day, were not such as would stand the test of rational examination. Therefore it became the habit of religious teachers, when closely questioned about their doctrines, to deny the lawfulness or propriety of exercising one's reason in matters of religious belief, and to seek shelter behind that much abused but very convenient word, *mystery*.

Swedenborg lays the axe at the root of this pernicious tree. He announces himself as the herald of a New Dispensation—a dispensation of *rational* religious truth; and throughout his writings he insists on the freest and most faithful exercise of the understanding in matters of faith. He repudiates, as a false and pernicious dogma, the prevalent idea of his day, that religious doctrines were not to be subjected to the scrutiny of reason, or brought within the grasp of the intellect; and insists that spiritual truth should be *seen*, or received rationally. Speaking of the New Church whose dawn he heralded, and whose doctrines he claims to have been specially commissioned to reveal, he says:

"In the New Church this tenet, that the understanding must be kept in subjection to faith, is to be rejected; and in place of it this is to be received as a maxim, that the truth of the church should be *seen* before it is received; and truth cannot be seen otherwise than rationally. . . . Who can acknowledge truth and retain it unless he sees it? And what is truth not seen but a voice not understood?" (A. R. n. 564.)

And everywhere throughout his writings he insists on the importance of receiving truth *rationally*; that is, of exercising our reason on whatever is presented us for religious truth, or of seeing it with the eye of the mind before we accept it. And he declares that a blind belief is dangerous, and unworthy to be called a belief.

"Shut people's eyes," he says, "stop their ears, that is, induce them not to think from any understanding, and then tell those

impressed with some idea of eternal life whatever you will, and they will believe it; yes, even if you should tell them that God can be angry and breathe vengeance; that He can inflict eternal damnation upon any one; that He requires to be moved to pity by his own Son's blood; . . . with other like extravagances. But open your eyes and unstop your ears, that is, think of these things from your understanding, and you will straightway see their utter disagreement with the truth." (D. F. n. 46.)

He says that no one in heaven accepts for truth anything which seems to him unreasonable, or which does not satisfy the demands of his intellect.

"All in heaven see truths with the understanding, and so receive them [that is, rationally]; but what they do not see with the understanding, they do not receive. And if any one says to them that they must have faith, although they neither see nor understand, they turn away, saying: How is that possible? What I see or understand, I believe; but I cannot believe what I do not see nor understand." (Ap. Ex. n. 239. See also D. P. n. 73-88. A. R. 564, 914. Ap. Ex. 1100, 232, 242, 759. D. F. 46, '7, '8. A. C. 5432.)

And throughout his theological writings this illumined teacher vindicates the claims of reason, and insists on the faithful exercise of the understanding in all our religious inquiries. The New Church therefore repudiates and condemns the old dogma that we are to believe blindly, or that, in religious matters, the understanding is to be held in servile subjection to faith. And while it never exalts human reason above Divine revelation, it inculcates, as an imperative duty, the free and faithful exercise of our rational faculties upon whatever claims to be such revelation, and counsels us to accept for religious truth nothing against which our reason revolts, or which fails to commend itself to our rational intuitions.

Religion without Asceticism.

Prior to the year 1757, asceticism was, in the popular mind, intimately connected with religion, and was looked upon by multitudes of professing Christians as forming a very considerable part of it. Religion was held to be something quite incompatible with any sort of indulgence in worldly pleasures, and more closely allied to austerity and gloom than to cheerfulness and joy. All kinds of amusements—even dancing and the drama—were held to be positively sinful, and unfit, therefore, for religious people to indulge in.

But the New Church teaches a different doctrine on this, as on all other subjects. It believes and teaches that the loves of self and the world are the ruling loves of the natural or unregenerate man ; while, in the truly human or regenerate state, the opposite loves—that is, love of the Lord and love of the neighbor—bear rule. It teaches further, that the whole work of regeneration consists, not in uprooting or extinguishing these natural loves, but in bringing them into a state of due subjection and subordination to the higher and truly human loves. Christianity, therefore, as understood in this Church and interpreted by its authorized teachings, inculcates purity, holiness and righteousness, without austerity or asceticism. It inculcates a reverent regard for our *whole* nature, the lower as well as the higher. It teaches that all our appetites and natural desires—our love of knowledge, love of wealth, love of amusement, love of pleasure, honor, reputation, power—are good and useful in their proper place ; and are not, therefore, to be extinguished, but to be brought into complete subjection to the higher and truly human loves. It holds that these are all good and useful as servants, but tyrannous and cruel as masters. And not only so, but that natural delights become more and more delightful as the higher motive or spiritual affection—love of the Lord and the neighbor—enters into and vitalizes them. To cite one or two passages in confirmation of this from the authorized teachings of this Church :

“ It is well to observe that the man who is regenerated is not deprived of the delight of pleasures of the body or the mind ; for this delight he enjoys fully after regeneration, even more fully than before, but in an inverted ratio. The delight of pleasures before regeneration was the all of his life ; but after regeneration the good of charity becomes the all of his life, and in this case the delight of pleasures serves as a means and an ultimate plane, in which spiritual good with its happiness and blessedness terminates. When, therefore, the order is to be inverted, then the former delight of pleasures expires and becomes as nothing, and a new delight from a spiritual origin is insinuated in its place.” (A. C. n. 8413.)

“ Some suppose that whoever desires to be happy in the other world must by no means enjoy the pleasures of the body and sense, but must abstain from all such delights, urging in favor of this, that corporeal and worldly pleasures abstract and detain the mind from spiritual and celestial life. They who think so, however, and therefore voluntarily give themselves up to wretchedness while living in the world, are not aware of the real truth.

“ It is by no means forbidden any one to enjoy corporeal or sensual pleasures, or those arising from the possession of lands,

money, honors and public appointments ; those of conjugal love and love of infants and children, of friendship and social intercourse ; the pleasure of listening to singing and music, or of seeing beautiful things of various kinds, such as handsome apparel, well-furnished houses, magnificent gardens, and the like, all of which are delightful from harmony ; the pleasure of smelling agreeable odors, of tasting delicacies and useful meats and drinks ; and the pleasure of touch ; for all these are the lowest or corporeal affections which have their origin from those which are interior. Interior affections which are living, all derive their delight from the good and the true ; and the good and true derive theirs from charity and faith, and these come from the Lord, consequently from the very essential Life. Therefore affections and pleasures which have this origin are alive ; and if genuine or from this source, they are never denied to any one. When pleasures are thus derived, their delight exceeds indefinitely that from every other origin." (A. C. n. 995.)

XV. — *FREE WILL.*

The freedom of the human will has been a subject of frequent debate and much angry controversy among Christians. But latterly the more thoughtful and intelligent of all denominations have been gradually settling down in the belief of the New Church doctrine on this subject—most of them probably, without the knowledge or even suspicion that it is the New Church doctrine ; just as they have been gradually sloughing off the old dogmas of election, reprobation, infant damnation, and the like, and accepting something more rational and Scriptural instead.

But at the time when Swedenborg wrote, the generally accepted doctrine on this subject among Protestant Christians was, that man is utterly destitute of free-will in spiritual and divine things ; that, in respect to the things which regard the soul's salvation, "he is like a stock or a stone, or like the pillar of salt into which Lot's wife was turned ;" that, "before conversion man is a rational creature who has understanding, but not in divine things ; and a will, but not such that he desires any saving good. Nevertheless, he cannot contribute anything to his own salvation, and in this respect he is worse than a stock or a stone ;" that "in conversion, whereby from being a child of wrath he becomes a child of grace, man does not co operate with the Holy Spirit, since the work of his conversion belongs exclusively to the Spirit," which "accomplishes it in the understanding, heart and will of man as in a passive subject—the man doing nothing but remain passive."

These extracts are all from the *Formula Concordiæ*, which contains the generally accepted opinions of Protestant Christendom a century and a quarter ago. And their teaching is seen to be quite in harmony with the other beliefs then prevalent in the Christian church, and affords another illustration of the spiritual darkness in which the church of that day was immersed, and the consequent need there was of new light from on High. Now contrast this old and once prevalent belief with the new doctrine as received and taught in the New Church.

This doctrine is : That man is not life, but only a form receptive of life from God, who alone is Life itself; that he is gifted with free-will in things spiritual as well as in things civil, moral and natural, and is, therefore, free to choose between right and wrong, and *to do* whichever he chooses; is as free to look to and obey the revealed will of God, as he is to obey the civil laws which constitute the expressed will of the kingdom or state; that free-will is an essential element of humanity, and without which man would not be man; that it is the Lord's continual desire that man should become spiritual by voluntarily receiving from Him spiritual truth and good—a thing which would be utterly impossible if he had not free-will in spiritual things; that without such free-will the Word of God would be useless, and its commands to believe and do and shun certain things, would be absurd and meaningless; that there could be no reciprocal union of man with the Lord and the Lord with man, consequently no heaven, which is the result of such union, without free-will in spiritual things; that the denial of such free-will would necessitate the impious conclusion, that God himself, and not man, is the cause of evil; that God is in the perpetual endeavor to recreate man in his own image and likeness, but cannot do it without man's coöperation, and this could not be given if man had no free-will in spiritual things; that only the good which a man freely chooses, or which is received by him in freedom, remains as a permanent possession; that man's free-will is forever held inviolable, and forever guarded by the Lord as his most precious endowment, since without it the good and truth of charity and faith could not be implanted in him, nor heavenly happiness be conferred. We are perfectly free to choose good or evil; but when we do good, while we do it *as of ourselves*, yet we ought to believe and acknowledge that it is the Lord who every moment gives us the disposition and power to do it. Swedenborg says :

“Such is the law of order, that man ought to do good as of himself, and not hang down his hands under the idea that, because he cannot of himself do anything that is good, he ought to wait for immediate influx from above, and so remain in a passive state; for this is contrary to order. But he ought to do good as of himself; and when he reflects upon the good that he does or has done, he should think, acknowledge and believe that it was the Lord in him who did it. For when a person hangs down his hands under the above-mentioned idea, he is not a subject on which the Lord can operate, since He cannot operate by influx on any one who deprives himself of everything into which the requisite power can be infused. . . . Man does not live from himself; yet unless he *appeared* to himself so to live, he could not possibly live at all.” (A. C. 1712.)

XVI.—*REPENTANCE.*

Most Christians at the present day will scarcely credit the statement, that, in Swedenborg's time there was no correct understanding of the Scripture doctrine of repentance. Yet it is strictly true. It was believed to consist in a species of anxiety and grief called contrition, which preceded their faith in those about to be regenerated,—a terror arising from fear of the wrath of God and eternal damnation; and that, without this contrition, the faith which attributes to man the merit and righteousness of Christ, could not be bestowed. This contrition, accompanied by the mere lip-confession that the individual was “all mere sin, thereby including all sins and excluding none”—without any perception or acknowledgment of any *particular* sins in himself—was thought to be repentance. Speaking on this subject in his last great work, Swedenborg says :

“I once heard a man praying in the spiritual world after this manner: ‘I am full of sores, leprous, unclean from my mother's womb. There is not a sound spot in me from my head to the sole of my foot. I am not worthy to raise my eyes toward God. I am deserving of death and eternal damnation. Have mercy upon me for the sake of thy Son. Purify me in his blood. On thy good pleasure depends the salvation of all. I pray for mercy.’ Hearing him pray thus, the bystanders asked, ‘How do you know that you are of such a character?’ He replied, ‘I know it because I have heard so.’ But he was then sent to the angelic examiners, before whom he spoke in the same way. And they after examination, reported that he had spoken the truth about himself, but that still he did not know of *one single evil* that was within him, because he had never examined himself, and had believed that after lip-confession evils were no longer evils in the sight of God, both because God turns his eyes away from them and because he Has been propitiated.

And the angels said that therefore he had not come to a sense of any of his evils, although he had been a willful adulterer, a thief, a wily detractor and intensely revengeful, and was still such in heart and will." (T. C. R. 517.)

So foreign from the truth was the idea concerning repentance, which this individual had received from the church of his day while he was on earth !

But the New Church teaches a different doctrine on this subject. It teaches that man is born with an inclination (inherited from foregone ancestry) to all kinds of evil—the proclivity to particular kinds varying in strength with different individuals. And unless these evils are overcome or removed, the man remains in them ; and they cannot be removed without repentance. This is the first step in the regenerate life. And the beginning of repentance is self-examination, and the consequent recognition and acknowledgment of *particular* evils in one's self, that need to be removed before their opposite heavenly goods can be received. And when the evil inclination is discovered, the individual should acknowledge it before the Lord, supplicate Divine assistance in its removal, turn from it as from the fire of hell, shun its indulgence as a sin against God, and begin a new life, that is, should seek to develop and strengthen in himself the opposite good inclination. And not only must we examine our outward actions, but the thought and intention from which the actions proceed, if we would perform true repentance.

"As, for example, when a man's thought, will and intention incline him to revenge, adultery, theft, false-witness,—blasphemy against God, the holy Word, the church, and the like ; if he attends to this, and inquires whether he would actually commit these evils if the fear of the law and for his good name did not hinder ; and if, after this scrutiny, he decides that he must not will to commit them because they are sins, he truly and interiorly repents. . . . He who does this repeatedly, feels the delights of evil when they return as disagreeable, and finally condemns them to hell." (T. C. R. 563.)

"He who would be saved, must confess his sins and do the work of repentance. To confess sins is to know evils, to see them in one's self, to acknowledge them, to make himself guilty, and condemn himself on account of them. When this is done before God, it constitutes the confession of sin.

"To do the work of repentance is to desist from sins when he has thus confessed them, and from a humble heart has made supplication about remission ; and further, to lead a new life according to the precepts of faith.

“He who only acknowledges in a general way that he is a sinner, and makes himself guilty of *all* evils, and does not explore himself, that is, see his sins, makes confession but not the confession of repentance; for he lives afterwards as before.

“He who lives the life of faith, does the work of repentance daily; for he reflects upon the evils appertaining to himself, acknowledges them, shuns them, and supplicates the Lord for aid.

. . . Repentance of the mouth and not of the life is not repentance. Sins are remitted only by repentance of the life.” (A. C. 8387-’94. See also A. R. 531.)

“A man forever remains of such a character as is his life [or ruling love], and by no means such as he is [or appears to be] at the hour of death; for repentance at that time is of no avail with the evil, but it confirms the state with the good.” (Ap. Ex. 194.)

XVII.—*REGENERATION.*

What the New Church believes and teaches in regard to man’s hereditary nature, was stated in the previous chapter. From a long line of foregone ancestry he inherits tendencies to all kinds of evil. His hereditary life is supremely selfish. The properly human life is the life of unselfish love—the Lord’s own life in the human soul. This is the higher or heavenly life which every man is made capable of receiving, and which we must receive before we can enter the kingdom of heaven, or before we can know from personal experience what heaven really is. It is in its essential nature the very opposite of that life into which we are born naturally, which is a purely selfish life. Therefore we must be “born again”—“born from Above”—“born of God”—before we can become truly the children of God, or have the heavenly Father’s name “in our foreheads.” Agreeable to the Divine declaration, “Except a man be born again [or born *from Above*], he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John iii. 3.) And to be born again, or born from Above, is to be born into a new and higher degree* of life than that which

* According to Swedenborg there are three degrees of life belonging to the soul, corresponding to the three angelic heavens, the natural, spiritual and celestial. These degrees are opened successively in all who become regenerate; and with the opening of each degree, the individual is introduced or born into a new and higher degree of life. The lowest or natural degree is opened by simple obedience to a low or natural form of truth—the literal sense of the Word. The spiritual degree is opened by a rational understanding of the truth, or a perception of the spiritual sense of the Word, and obedience thereto.

we have received hereditarily ; or, what is the same, it is to experience the birth or development of the Lord's own life within us.

The next question is (and a most important one it is, too), Under what conditions does this new birth of the soul take place? Or when, in what manner and according to what laws is this higher life developed and matured?

The doctrine as hitherto held and taught on this subject is : That regeneration or the new birth is a change of heart wrought suddenly and miraculously by the sovereign grace of God, and not according to any known laws, or with any co-operation on the part of the individual. It has been confounded or held to be identical with conversion, and to be exclusively the work of the Holy Spirit with which man has nothing whatever to do—except to wait for the mysterious operation of the Spirit.

This was the generally received view among Protestant Christians of the last century, and is probably held by many at the present day. But some have held, and still hold, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration—the belief that the new birth from Above takes place the moment the sacrament of baptism is administered. “It is a fact known to all,” says Dr. Bushnell, “that the rite of baptism has been regarded by some as having a peculiar sacramental or magical power, and was understood to convey a grace immediately to the subject, washing away his sins and setting him in a regenerate state ; and the language of the prayer-book [Episcopal] I suppose represents this opinion.”

The New Church Doctrine.

Contrary to all this, the New Church believes and teaches that regeneration is a complete but gradual change of the character wrought in man by the sovereign power of God, but *not without the individual's voluntary coöperation*. That it takes place in accordance with the revealed laws of the heavenly life, but only on condition that these laws be faithfully obeyed. In other words,

And the celestial or highest degree is opened when the individual comes to act from a higher principle than mere obedience to any form of truth—from love to the Lord and the neighbor. All in whom this love has come to be the prompting motive, are born into the highest or celestial life, and are prepared for an abode among the celestial angels. Thus regeneration is seen, in the light of the New Church, to be a thing of degrees.

it teaches that men are born saints or angels (that is, born into the new and higher life) very much as they are born artists, mechanics, farmers or engineers. They inherit the germs of, or the capability of becoming, either—though the germs of the higher life are for the most part implanted in infancy and childhood, and remain stored up in the interiors awaiting the vivifying influence in due time of the beams of the spiritual Sun. But they actually *become* neither the one nor the other without much self-imposed labor—without first learning certain principles or laws, and then reducing these laws to practice.

This Doctrine Illustrated.

Take the accomplished musician for illustration. How has he become such? He inherited the talent or aptitude for music, as we all inherit the capability of becoming angels. And so we may say the musician was in him *in potency* when a child. But he was yet in an embryo state. The boy was then as unconscious of the entrancing delights which the music wrapped up within him would one day produce, as a child before birth is unconscious of its latent capabilities, or of the joys of its post-natal state. Properly speaking, the musician was not yet born. He had only an embryonic or latent existence, like that of the angel in the unregenerate man.

Observe, now, the manner of his birth, —for this will illustrate the manner in which every one who becomes regenerate, is born from Above. It will show us how we are to be brought out of our natural state in which we love ourselves supremely, into the opposite state of love to the Lord and the neighbor; or how “the new man” created in the image of the Lord Jesus Christ, comes forth from “the old man” that is “corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.”

First, the individual places himself, or is placed, under the instruction of a master. He becomes a pupil or learner. He takes lessons of a music-teacher. He acquaints himself with the rules of the art—certain musical laws—and then reduces these rules to practice. He does not learn them all at once, but only a few, and the very simplest at first. When he has practiced these for a time, he learns other and more difficult rules; and straightway proceeds to reduce these also to practice. Thus he goes on, learning and practicing the rules of the art. But he finds little pleasure in these first lessons. He compels himself, however, to go through with

them. It is all labor and drudgery at first, which he performs reluctantly and without one thrill of delight, yet in the hope of one day becoming a musician. How stiff and clumsy his fingers are at the start. How slowly and awkwardly they hobble over the keys, like a child just beginning to walk ! How much more readily they go wrong than right ! And he finds it far more difficult to *practice* the rules, than to commit them to memory. But he struggles on, sometimes hopeful, sometimes discouraged.

At last, by dint of patience and perseverance and much hard practice, the difficulties are all overcome. The musical laws are all incarnated in him. They flow out from the tips of his fingers the moment he seats himself at the instrument. He is now able to render with facility and effect the most difficult compositions of Beethoven or Mozart. And he finds, too, that by practicing, and thereby learning to give faithful expression to, the laws that govern in the realm of music, he becomes more and more enamored with the art. Strange and unlooked for raptures transport him. He is introduced, as it were, into a new world. Sweet melodies are rippling all around him. He experiences a delight in executing, or in listening to the execution of, some grand composition, of which, at the beginning of his musical education, he could form no conception.

In this and in no other way is the musician born. He comes forth not suddenly nor in any miraculous manner ; but slowly, gradually, after years of hard study, close application and unremitting toil. The student learns certain musical rules, and then *compels himself* to reduce these rules to practice. And so at last the musician is produced, developed, or born.

And the painter, sculptor, architect, and engineer are born in the same way.

And in a way precisely similar is “ the new man ” or angel born. In other words, we are introduced or born in a similar manner into the higher life—into a state of supreme love to the Lord and the neighbor ;—are lifted out of our low natural state which is hell, into that exalted spiritual state which is heaven. And this is what is meant by being “ born again,” or “ born from Above.”

The task of learning the laws of the soul’s higher life, or of receiving the truths of the Word into the understanding merely, is comparatively easy. *Obedying* these truths—*living* them—*practicing* them, in the parlor, the kitchen, the office, the shop, the counting-

house, the market-place, the school-room, on the farm, at the fire-side, and in legislative halls—everywhere and always conforming our dispositions and conduct to their requirements, and so weaving these laws into the very fabric of our spiritual being, and making them, as it were, a part of ourselves—this is the laborious and difficult part of the work.

And it needs no argument to prove that this renewal or re-creation of the inner man—this complete change of the character or ruling love, cannot be suddenly wrought. It is the work of a life-time—the Lord's own work, but one which He cannot do without our coöperation. It takes place in the degree that one regards the indulgence of any known evil as a sin against God, and shuns it *because it is a sin*—at the same time conforming his life to all known truth from a sense of religious obligation. So far as he does this, his evil inclinations are overcome, and the opposite good inclinations are given him in their stead. And this is no sudden, but a gradual process. Agreeable to the teaching of Scripture, which compares the growth of this new life from its germ in the soul, to the growth of a plant from its seed ; “first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.”

And while a man should shun evils *as of himself*, he should at the same time (and *must* if he would lay the axe at the root of the tree, and remove the prompting motive to evil) believe and acknowledge that it is the Lord who gives him the inclination and power to do so ; and that in and of himself alone he is utterly helpless, having no power to shun evil or to do good.

“The regenerated man,” says Swedenborg, “is a heaven in the least form ; therefore also there is in him an order similar to that which is in heaven. When man is born he is, as to hereditary evils, a hell in the least form ; and he also becomes a hell, so far as he takes from hereditary evils and superadds to them his own. Hence the order of his life from nativity and from actual life, is opposite to the order of heaven, for man, from the *proprium*, loves himself more than the Lord, and the world more than heaven ; when yet the life of heaven consists in loving the Lord above all things, and the neighbor as himself. Hence it is evident that the former life which is of hell, must be altogether destroyed, that is, evils and falsities must be removed, in order that the new life which is the life of heaven, may be implanted. This cannot by any means be done hastily ; for every evil being inrooted with its falsities, has connexion with all evils and their falsities, and these are innumerable, and their connexion is so manifold that it cannot be comprehended

even by the angels, but only by the Lord. Hence it is evident that the life of hell in man cannot be destroyed suddenly, for if suddenly he would altogether expire; neither can the life of heaven be implanted suddenly, for if it were, the same result would follow. There are thousands and thousands of arcana of which scarcely a single one is known, whereby man is led of the Lord, when from the life of hell he rises into the life of heaven. . . . Therefore many have fallen into errors concerning man's liberation from evils and falsities, or concerning the remission of sins, believing that the life of hell can, through mercy, be transcribed into the life of heaven with man in a moment; when yet the whole work of regeneration is of mercy, and no others are regenerated but those who receive the mercy of the Lord by faith and life during their abode in the world." A. C. 9336.

"Regeneration begins when a man abstains from evils as sins, and progresses as he shuns them, and is perfected as he fights against them; and then, as he conquers from the Lord, he is regenerated. With him who is regenerated the order of life is reversed. From being natural he becomes spiritual. . . . Every man is regenerated by truths and a life according to them; for by truths he knows how to live, and by life he puts truth in practice." D. P. 84.

"They who are born of the Lord, that is, regenerated, receive the Lord's life which is divine love, that is, love toward the whole human race, consisting in the desire to save all eternally, if possible. They who have not the Lord's love, that is, who do not love their neighbor as themselves, have not his life. Consequently they are in no respect born of Him, and therefore they cannot be heirs of his kingdom." A. C. 1803.

XVIII.—*CHARITY, FAITH AND WORKS.*

According to the belief and teaching of the New Church, these three cardinal doctrines of Christianity are so intimately connected, that it is impossible for either to exist in its genuine form without the other two; as impossible as it is for the heart, lungs and their joint activity to exist in the human body, except in vital union with each other. The heart could not perform its functions, and therefore could not exist *as a heart*, without the lungs, nor the lungs without the heart: nor could there be any operation or resultant activity without the union of these two. Hence these three doctrines, though they may be thought of separately, are really one, because incapable of a separate and vital existence.

The Old Doctrine.

At the time Swedenborg wrote, the doctrine of salvation and justification by *faith alone* was held as fundamental in all Protestant churches. The meaning of which was, that the sinner has only to *believe* that the full penalty of his transgressions has been paid by the suffering and death of Christ—the wrath of God thereby appeased and his pardon secured. This was “laying hold on salvation” through faith alone—charity and works being utterly excluded as necessary factors. To quote a few passages from the *Formula Concordiæ* which contained the accepted Protestant creed of that day :

“Justification by faith alone, is remission of sins, deliverance from damnation, reconciliation with the Father, adoption as sons, and is effected by the imputation of the merit or righteousness of Christ.” —“Good works have nothing to do with justification by faith.” —“The business of justification is between God and us, and is to appease his wrath.” —“If any one, therefore, believes he can obtain the remission of his sins because he is possessed of charity, he brings a reproach on Christ by an impious and vain confidence in his own righteousness.” —“Good works are to be utterly excluded in treating of justification and eternal life.” —“The position that good works are necessary to salvation, is to be rejected, because it takes away the comfort of the gospel and gives occasion to doubt of the grace of God.” —“That good works are necessary unto salvation, ought not to be taught and defended, but rather exploded and rejected by the churches as false.” —Pp. 87, 89, 589, 704, 705, Leipsic edition, 1756.

And Martin Luther who first formulated this faith-alone dogma, says :

“A Christian cannot, if he will, lose his salvation by any multitude or magnitude of sins, unless he ceases to *believe*; for no sins can damn him, but unbelief alone. Everything else . . . is absorbed in a moment by that faith.” —*Luther de Captiv. Bab. II.*, 264. *Comp. Dusp. I.*, 523.

The New Church Doctrine.

But very different is the doctrine of the New Church. According to its teaching, there are two parts or faculties of the mind—understanding and will; the former being the receptacle of truth (or its opposite), and the latter the receptacle of love (or its opposite); for man has no life of his own; he is merely an organized form capable of receiving life from the Lord. These two faculties are re-

lated like light and heat, or like the lungs and the heart. Spiritual truth, such as the Lord has revealed concerning Himself and his kingdom, including all the laws of the soul's higher or heavenly life, may be received into the understanding and believed. But this belief or mere intellectual apprehension of truth, is not faith; it is simply a persuasion, or knowledge of faith,—a something belonging to the outermost region of the mind, the memory. The truth becomes faith only when it is united to love (which is its vital element) in the will; and it becomes united to love only when the belief of the truth is so thorough and devout, that the individual regulates his thought, purposes and conduct by it—*lives* it day by day—shunning as a sin whatever evil the truth condemns, and doing whatever good and useful acts it approves or enjoins. And these acts, whereby faith becomes wedded to charity, or truth in the understanding becomes married to love in the will—if done (as the truth requires) in the hearty acknowledgment that the power and disposition to do them, are every moment given by the Lord—are the good works which consummate the heavenly marriage of good and truth in the soul. Works are the ultimate acts in which love in the will guided by truth in the understanding, terminates and rests as on a secure foundation, and without which it would have no permanence—no real existence in the soul beyond that of a shadow or a dream. Hence the reason why so much importance is attached to *works* in Scripture, and why it is said that in the Hereafter every one will be judged and rewarded “according to his works.”

Thus the New Church teaches that charity, faith and works are united like heart, lungs and their resultant action, or like will, understanding and their joint operation in man; and that neither is genuine, or can have any real existence, apart from the other two. It teaches that love or charity is of paramount importance, and that faith without charity is like the sun's light without its invigorating warmth; that “the Lord is not conjoined with man by faith [or mere belief], but by the *life* of faith which is charity;” that “charity constitutes both heaven and the church, and not faith separate from charity;” that “the church would be one and not many, if charity were regarded as the essential thing;” that “true charity is to act justly and faithfully in the office, business and employment in which a man is engaged, and with those with whom he has any dealings;” and that “charity and faith are only mental and perishable things, unless they be determined to works and co-exist in them

when it is possible." A volume might be filled with passages from Swedenborg illustrating the truth of what is here said. But we will only add four or five brief extracts.*

"There is no other faith than that which is grounded in charity. He that has no charity cannot have the smallest portion of faith. Charity is the very ground in which faith is implanted. It is the heart whence faith derives existence and life. Therefore, . . . for any one to endeavor to form to himself the life of faith without charity, is like endeavoring to continue bodily life by the lungs alone, without the heart." (A. C. n. 1843.)

"To have faith is nothing else than to live according to it [that is, according to truth in the understanding]; and to live according to it is not only to know and think, but also to will and do; for faith is not in a man while it is only in his knowledge and thought, but when it is also in his will and deeds. Faith in man is a faith of the life; but faith not yet in him, is a faith of the memory, and of the thought derived therefrom." (Ap. Ex. 250.)

"The intellectual principle is what first receives truths, since it sees them and introduces them to the will; and when they are in the will, they are in the man, for the will is the man himself. Whoever supposes, therefore, that faith is faith with man until he wills those truths, and from willing does them, is very much deceived; nor have the truths of faith any life until man wills and does them." (A. C. 9224.)

"Heavenly life is contracted from all those ends, thoughts and works which are grounded in love toward our neighbor; this is the life to which all those things called faith have respect, and it is procured by all things appertaining to faith. Hence it may be seen what faith is, viz., that it is charity; for all things called the doctrines of faith lead to charity; they are all contained in charity, and are all derived from charity." (A. C. 2228.)

"By the works according to which a man is judged [in the hereafter] are not meant such works as are exhibited merely in the external form, but such as they are internally also. For every deed proceeds from man's will and thought; . . . therefore a deed or work in itself considered, is nothing but an effect which derives its soul and life from the will and thought, insomuch that it is will and thought in an external form. Hence it follows that the deed is such as are the will and thought which produce the deed." (H. H. 472.)

XIX.—BELIEVING IN GOD.

Nothing reveals the searching and eminently *practical* character

* For a more complete elucidation of this doctrine, the reader is referred to Vol. V. of the "Swedenborg Library," which treats of "Charity, Faith and Works."

of the New Church doctrines more clearly, or shows more distinctly the wide difference between this Church and those which have preceded it, than the strength and frequency with which its teachings emphasize the importance of keeping the commandments, or *living* the divine precepts. There are doubtless multitudes in all the churches of to-day, who do not even *believe in God*, according to the New Church standard of belief. For this Church teaches that only those really believe in Him, who reverently obey his precepts. The following brief extracts from Swedenborg are given in confirmation of this:

“To believe in the Lord is not only to acknowledge Him, but also to keep his commandments. . . . Man’s mind consists of understanding and will; and it is the part of the understanding to think, but of the will to do. Wherefore when man only acknowledges the Lord from the thought of the understanding, he approaches Him with only one-half of his mind; but when he keeps his commandments, he approaches Him with his whole mind; and this is to believe in Him.” (T. C. R. n. 151.)

“To believe in God is to know and *to do*; but to believe those things which are from God, is to know and yet not do. They who are really Christians, both *know* and *do*, that is, they believe in God; but they who are not truly Christians, know and *do not*.” (A. C. 9239.)

“Man supposes that, although he lives wickedly, he can still have faith to believe at least that there is a God, that the Lord is the Savior of the world, that there is a heaven and a hell, that the Word is holy, and so on; but I can assert that, if he does not shun evils because they are sins, and thence look to the Lord, he does not believe in those things at all; for they are not of his life and love, but only of his memory and knowledge; and they do not become of his life and love before he fights against evils and overcomes them. This has been made evident to me from many after death, who supposed that they had at least believed in the existence of God, and that the Lord was the Savior of the world, with other things of a like nature; but still they who had lived in evil, had in reality no belief at all.” (Ap. Ex. 839.)

XX.—SEEING AND KNOWING GOD.

One of the important and instructive spiritual laws revealed for the New Church, is, that every one sees or apprehends spiritual truth according to his own state or character. The higher and more heavenly is one’s state, therefore, the higher and clearer are his apprehensions of heavenly truth. And in consequence of this law,

the character and aspect of the Divine Being himself, are very different to different individuals—and to the same individual in different states of mind, or when contemplating the Divine from different principles. It is so even in heaven.

Swedenborg says that the angels do not all see God alike ; that his appearance differs as their states differ. To those in the highest or celestial heaven, that is, to those whose love is most exalted, pure and fervent, He appears as a Sun, immeasurably more brilliant than the sun of this world ; because such appearance corresponds to, and is one of the normal results of, the clear shining of his truth and love in their hearts. To the spiritual angels, or those in a lower state, He appears less brilliant—comparatively as a Moon. And to infernal spirits—those who are dominated by the passions and propensities of their lower nature—those whose souls are darkened by falsity, selfishness and sin, He appears as darkness and thick darkness, according to the nature and degree of the evils in which they are immersed. For the great and eternal law of correspondence between the inner and the outer, is what determines the character of the whole phenomenal world in the Hereafter, even the appearance of the Lord Himself.

And not only so, but we are further told that God appears different to different persons in this life—to each one according to his real character or spiritual state. They who are nearest to Him, that is, who receive his unselfish love into their hearts in largest measure, and let it shine out most conspicuously in their lives—who are most *like* God in the spirit and temper of their minds—see Him most truly. They understand his nature and character, and therefore see Him (for to *see*, spiritually, is to understand) from the spirit and principles in themselves which are from Him. As we deny self, and encourage and strengthen in our hearts purity of motive, nobleness of purpose, and an unselfish desire to serve and thus promote the welfare of others, we receive more of God's own life, become more like Him, and so have a better understanding or clearer view of Him. As it is written : “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” In confirmation of this statement, we cite the following from Swedenborg :

“That the Lord appears to every one according to his quality [or state], may be manifest from this consideration : that He appears to those in the inmost or third heaven as a sun from which proceeds ineffable light, because the inhabitants of that heaven are princi-

pled in the good of love to the Lord ; and that He appears to those in the middle or second heaven as a moon, because the inhabitants of that heaven are more remotely or obscurely in love to Him, being principled in love towards their neighbor ; but in the ultimate or first heaven, He does not appear as a sun nor yet as a moon, but only as light, which light far exceeds that of this world. And since the Lord appears to every one according to his quality, therefore He cannot appear to those in hell otherwise than as a dusky cloud and thick darkness. From these considerations it may be clearly seen that the Lord appears to every one according to his quality [or character], because according to reception." (A. C. n. 6832.)

"No one can see God otherwise than from such principles as are in himself ; as he who is in hatred, sees Him from hatred, he who is in unmercifulness, sees Him from unmercifulness ; and on the other hand, they who are in charity and mercy, see Him from and in these principles. The case herein is as with the rays of light, which, where they fall into ugly forms, are turned into ugly colors ; but when they fall into beautiful forms, are then turned into beautiful colors." (Ibid., n. 8819.)

"The Lord appears to every individual according to each one's own character or quality,—to the celestial angels as a sun, to the spiritual angels as a moon, to all the good as a light of various delight and pleasantness ; but to the wicked as smoke and a consuming fire. And as the Jews, when the law was promulgated, had nothing of charity, but were governed by self-love and the love of the world, consequently by evils and falsities, therefore He appeared to them [from Mount Sinai] as *smoke* and *fire*, when at the same moment He appeared to the angels as a sun, and as celestial light. That He appeared thus to the Jews by reason of their evil nature or quality, is plain from the following passages (Ex. xxiv. 16, 17 : xix. 18 : Deut. iv. 11, 12 : v. 23–25). The case would be the same if any other person who lives in hatred and its defilements, should see the Lord. He would only be able to see Him from the principle of hatred and its defilements, which, receiving the rays of goodness and truth from the Lord, would change them into such fire, smoke and darkness."

XXI.—WHAT IS IT TO LOVE GOD?

The Bible teaches that, to love God with all the heart, and the neighbor as one's self, is the sum and substance of all the divine precepts. For it says that, "on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." But the meaning of this precept, simple as it appears, was but dimly apprehended by Christians a hundred years ago. And not many, even at this day, seem to have any clear idea of what it is to love the Lord supremely. Few seem to understand that it is to love truth, sincerity, justice, benevolence—all those di-

vine and heavenly principles which come from God, and which, when received by men, make them angels—images and likenesses of the Heavenly Father. Nor has it been, nor is it now, generally known that these divine principles are truly loved, only so far as they are carried into practice—ultimated in our daily lives—made governing principles of action in all our intercourse and transactions with our fellow-men. But the teachings of the New Church are explicit on this subject. Let two or three passages from the Writings suffice for illustration :

“ So far as a man shuns and is averse to unlawful gains acquired by fraud and craft, he wills what is sincere, right and just ; and at length he begins to love what is sincere because it is sincere, what is right because it is right, and what is just because it is just, for the reason that they are from the Lord and the love of the Lord is in them. For to love the Lord is not to love his person, but it is to love those things which proceed from Him, for these are the Lord with man ; thus it is to love what is itself sincere, what is itself right, what is itself just ; and since these things are the Lord, therefore in proportion as a man loves them and acts from them, he acts from the Lord ; and in the same proportion the Lord removes things insincere and unjust, even as to the intentions and will wherein they have their roots.” (Ap. Ex. n. 973.)

“ By loving the Lord is not meant to love Him as a person, but it is to love the divine good and truth which are the Lord in heaven and in the church. And these two principles are not loved by knowing them, thinking them, understanding them and speaking them, but by willing and doing them.” (Ap. Ex. n. 1099.)

“ He who thinks that he loves the Lord when he does not live according to his precepts, is greatly deceived ; for to live according to his precepts, is to love Him. These precepts are the truths which are from the Lord, and he is in them ; therefore so far as these are loved, that is, so far as the life is formed according to them from love, so far the Lord is loved. The reason is, that the Lord loves man, and from love wills that he may be happy to eternity ; and man cannot be made happy except by a life according to his precepts. . . . The Lord also teaches in John : ‘ He that hath my precepts and doeth them, he it is that loveth me.’ ‘ He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings,’ xiv. 21-24.” (A. C. 10,579.)

XXII.—PRAYER.

All Christians believe in the need of prayer. It is enjoined as a duty and its importance and use are clearly implied in both the Old and New Testament Scriptures. The Psalmist says : “ Evening and morning and noon will I pray.” “ The Lord will regard the

prayer of the destitute, and will not despise their prayer.” “Elisha prayed unto the Lord,” and his prayer was answered (2 Kings vi. 17, 18). Moses and Samuel and Hezekiah and Ezra and Jeremiah and Daniel and all the prophets of old, were men of prayer. So were Peter and Paul and Silas and John. And our Saviour himself when he was in the flesh, often prayed, sometimes “continuing all night in prayer to God” (Luke vi. 12). And He told his disciples that “men ought always to pray” (Luke xviii. 1); and that “whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Matt. xxi. 22). And not only this, but He taught them how to pray, counseling them not to use “vain repetitions, as the heathen do;” nor to be like the hypocrites, who love to pray “standing at the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men;” and He gave them a form of prayer which, for simplicity, depth, and comprehensiveness, infinitely surpasses every other prayer that was ever uttered, and will remain as a perfect model for all future ages.

And so all professing Christians agree as to the importance and use of prayer. But what is the use of it, or in what way is the use accomplished? Does it change the disposition or purpose of the all-wise and loving Father, and cause Him to do differently from what He otherwise would have done? So have Christians hitherto believed. But a large and constantly increasing class are coming to reject this theory or philosophy of prayer. They cannot believe that the purpose of the infinitely Wise and Good, is ever changed by the prayers of feeble and erring mortals. They require a different explanation of it to satisfy the demands of their reason. And the New Church has a different explanation to offer.

According to its teaching, the essence of genuine prayer is the heart’s sincere desire for such things as the Lord is ever ready and waiting to give. It effects no change of purpose in the Divine Being, but changes the disposition and feelings of the suppliant, bringing him into a higher and holier state. It opens the interior avenues of the soul to a freer influx of the divine wisdom and love, and so makes it *appear* as if a change had actually been wrought in God himself—as if He felt differently toward the suppliant from what He otherwise would have felt.

When the earth’s atmosphere is laden with smoke, the sun appears dim or fiery red; but when the smoke is dissipated and the atmosphere purified, he appears in all his native brightness. A

change *appears* to have taken place in the sun ; but this appearance is caused by the change in our own atmosphere. In respect to the earth, it is as if the sun itself had changed. And so the apparent changes in the Divine Being are all caused by the real changes in our own minds and hearts.

God's gifts are all bestowed on certain conditions ; and we cannot receive them without complying with the conditions. You desire an increase of bodily strength : Well, exercise your limbs regularly and within the bounds of moderation, and an increase of strength will be given you. Or you desire a field of corn ; but it will not be given unless you prepare the soil, and plant the corn, and weed and tend it according to the requirements of its nature ? And if you desire that the corn be converted into bread, you know the Lord will not do this without your intelligent co-operation. You must do your part of the work. You must gather and thresh and grind the corn, and make the meal into bread.

Precisely so is it in regard to God's higher or spiritual gifts. The graces of heaven are never bestowed except on certain conditions. And one of these conditions is, that we recognize them as all belonging to and coming from the Lord, and humbly and earnestly ask for them. They can be given only to those who sincerely desire them ; for no others are in a state to receive them. Therefore it is written : "Ask, and it shall be given you."

Sincere and earnest prayer, then, for patience, forbearance, self-denial, uprightness, courage, resignation, contentment, trust, fidelity to duty—for *all* the heavenly graces which the Lord is ever ready to bestow, and which are the only things proper for rational beings to pray for—is always sure to prevail. Such prayer offered every day, as we take our daily food—every hour, in the secret closet of the heart ; such prayer, when it has become the habit of the soul, and is not the mere babble of the lips, is as sure to be answered as bodily health and vigor are sure to follow obedience to the laws of health.

And the reason is plain ; for it is in the nature of true prayer to operate upon the interiors of the suppliant. It is in its nature to open the inner avenues of the soul, through which flow the light and warmth of the upper spheres. The Lord is ever ready to give. All we need to do, is to put ourselves in an attitude to receive. We must, therefore, *desire* the heavenly life—must long for it, strive for it, pray for it, and—*obey* the Divine behests.

Pray, then, for light to enable you to discern your evil inclinations,

and power to overcome them, and new strength will be given you day by day. When your pathway seems dark, pray that the Lord will shine upon it, and the light of his countenance will guide you. When a wilderness of difficulty is before you, and you know not which way to turn, look to the Lord Jesus Christ in humble faith and earnest prayer, and He will be to you a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. When you go to your daily duties, pray that his Spirit may go with you and shield you from the tempter's snare, and keep you diligent and kind and just and faithful, and the coveted blessing will not be withheld. If in your family, your business, or your social relations, you have peculiar trials, pray that the Lord will give you grace to bear them with meekness and patience, and your prayer will certainly be answered. Pray for a blessing on your enemy, if you have one; and the very petition, if sincere and earnest, will soften your heart toward that enemy, and so bring down a blessing on yourself—perhaps on him likewise. Pray for the prosperity of a righteous cause, and your prayer will be answered—in this, if in no other way: It will open your soul to a fresh influx of God's grace, and bind your heart more strongly to that cause. Pray for the poor, the sick, the tempted, the sorrowing, and you will grow more into sympathy with them, and your heart will be imbued with a sweeter, tenderer and broader humanity. Pray for the persecuted, the down-trodden and enslaved, and your prayers, oft-repeated, will open within you the gates of heaven, through which the Lord will pour his grace upon you more abundantly, making you more tender and compassionate like Himself;—making you feel more sensibly the wrongs of others, and nerving you with fresh courage and resolution to do your part toward breaking their bands asunder.

And since thought and affection have extension, prayer for the sinning, the sick and the sorrowing, may sometimes (according to the depth or intensity of the desire, and the condition of the person prayed for) be effectual in removing the malign and infesting spheres, and thereby bringing the individual into new and more orderly relations with the Lord and heaven.

Thus it is that sincere prayer for whatever is just and pure and righteous—prayer that the Lord's kingdom of truth and love may be established and built up—is always answered. For such prayer tends, by an unfailing law, to bind the affections of the petitioner more closely to the things of his kingdom. It is among the divinely appointed means of drawing the soul into closer fellowship with the

Lord, and renewing us after his own Divine likeness. And this is the *end* of all prayer,—as indeed it is of all doctrine, of all faith, of all instruction, of all obedience.

“Prayer in itself considered,” says Swedenborg, “is discourse with God; and, moreover, a certain internal view of those things which are properly the objects of prayer; so that at such time there is a kind of opening of a man’s internals toward God—but this with a difference dependent on the man’s state and the nature of the things prayed for. If the prayer spring from love and faith, and it is only celestial and spiritual things for which he prays, then in prayer there is something like a revelation which manifests itself in the affection of the person praying, as to hope, consolation, or some inward joy.” (A. C. 2535.)

The Highest Kind of Worship.

Formal worship—praying orally on bended knees in the temple or the closet—was the only kind of worship that Christians generally thought of a hundred years ago. But Swedenborg, without in the least discouraging this practice, tells us of another and higher kind—a worship which consists in the conscientious and faithful performance of each one’s daily duties, and for which it is the chief end of oral prayer to fit and prepare us. And this higher kind of worship is held by the New Church to be that of all *true* worshipers—that of which the Bible speaks—that which the Heavenly Father especially approves and loves, and which is said to be in “spirit and in truth;” a worship offered continually, and in all places where the voice of duty is reverently heeded—where sorrow and suffering are patiently borne, where loving service is faithfully rendered, and useful work of whatever kind is honestly done. To cite two or three passages by way of confirmation:

“By the worship of God at this day, is meant principally the worship of the mouth in a temple morning and evening. But the worship of God does not consist essentially in this, but in a life of uses.” (A. C. n. 7884.)

“He who thinks that the worship of the Lord consists solely in frequenting the temple, hearing preaching there, and praying, and that this is enough, is much deceived. The real worship of the Lord consists in the performance of uses; and uses consist, during a man’s life in the world, in the faithful discharge of every one’s duty in his particular vocation; that is, in serving his country, society and his neighbor from the heart, in acting with sincerity in all his relations, and in performing duties prudently according to the nature of each. These uses are in the highest degree the exercises

of charity, and those whereby the Lord is principally worshiped. Frequenting the temple, listening to sermons, and saying prayers are also necessary ; but without uses, they are of no avail, for they are not of the life, but teach what the quality of the life should be. The angels in heaven have all their happiness from uses and according to uses, insomuch that uses are to them heaven, . . . these being the things according to which happiness is there given, and by which the Lord is principally worshiped." (A. C. 7038.)

"A man, while he lives in the world, should not omit the practice of external worship, for by this internal things are excited ; and external things are kept by external worship in a state of sanctity, so that internal things can flow in." (A. C. 1618.) "Yet [the real] worship does not consist in prayers and outward devotion, but in a life of charity. . . . The life of charity is the essential of worship, and posture and prayer its instrumental ; or, the primary part of worship is a life of charity, and its secondary is praying. From which it is evident that they who place all divine worship in oral and not in actual piety, err exceedingly. Actual piety is to act in every work and office from sincerity and rectitude, and according to what is just and equitable ; and this, because it is commanded by the Lord in the Word." (Ap. Ex. 325.)

XXIII.—*DIVINE PROVIDENCE.*

Among all the interesting and sublime disclosures which the Lord has been pleased to make for the use of his New Church, few are more important in a practical point of view, than the doctrine concerning the Divine Providence. Within the whole compass of theological literature, we know of nothing to be compared with Swedenborg's treatise on this subject, either in depth of wisdom, breadth of thought, conclusiveness of reasoning, or capability of satisfying the cravings of both head and heart.

Agreeable to these disclosures, the New Church believes and teaches that there is no such thing as blind chance ; that the universe in general, and in all its minutest particulars, is governed by infinite Love, which is guided in all its operations by an infinite Wisdom ; that the great end of creation was a heaven of angels from the human race—an end which Divine Providence is perpetually seeking ; that this end is pursued not blindly, nor in any arbitrary manner, but in conformity to the eternal laws of Divine order, which Providence is ever striving to make men understand and obey ; that, among the many and beautiful laws of Divine Providence, are included also the laws of permission, under which physical and

moral evils fall, all of which are permitted for the sake of a wise and beneficent end.

This doctrine of the Divine Providence assures us of the Lord's infinite wisdom and mercy in all that He permits us to suffer, as well as in all that his love provides. It teaches that He has supreme regard, not merely to our present and temporal, but to our future and eternal, welfare ; that, if He permits us to be crucified outwardly, it is that we may thereby be purified inwardly ; and if He suffers us to be afflicted in time, it is that we may thereby be made happier through eternity. It teaches that Infinite Love never forsakes one human soul,—no, not even in that soul's darkest and guiltiest hour ; that this Love pursues every individual through all his devious wanderings,—sometimes with warning and entreaty, sometimes with rebuke and chastisement,—always yearning to save and bless ; that it orders or permits each smallest circumstance of our lives and overrules all our outward ills—sicknesses, disappointments, losses and sorrows, for our highest ultimate good.

Only those who have experienced the cheering and strengthening influence of this doctrine in dark hours and amid the stern trials and rough conflicts of life, can know how replete it is with encouragement, comfort and inward support. Addressing itself to the intellect not less than to the heart, it leads the receiver to a joyful recognition of the Divine Wisdom and Love in every event, and so holds the creature in perpetual and blissful communion with his Creator.

“The Divine Providence of the Lord,” says Swedenborg, “extends to the most particular things of a man's life ; for there is only one Fountain of life which is the Lord, from whom we are, live, and act.

“They who think from worldly things about the Divine Providence, conclude from them that it is only universal, and that particulars appertain to man. But such persons do not know the arcana of heaven ; for they form their conclusions only from the loves of self and the world, and their pleasures. Therefore, when they see the evil exalted to honors, and acquiring wealth more than the good, and that success attends them according to their artifices, they say in their hearts that this would not be the case if the Divine Providence were in all and singular things ; not considering that the Divine Providence does not regard that which shortly passes away, and ends with man's life in the world, but that it regards what remains to eternity.”* (N. J. D. 258, '69.)

* For an extended and exhaustive treatment of this subject, the reader is referred to Vol. IV. of the “Swedenborg Library,” which treats throughout of the “Divine Providence and its Laws.”

“The Divine Providence is universal, that is, in the smallest particulars; and they who are in the stream of Providence are continually conveyed to happiness, whatever be the appearance of the means; and they are in the stream of Providence who put their trust in the Divine and attribute all things to Him; and they are not in the stream of Providence who trust to themselves alone and attribute all things to themselves; for they are in the opposite principle, since they refuse to allow a providence to the Divine, and claim it to themselves. It is to be observed, also, that so far as any one is in the stream of Providence, he is in a state of peace; and so far as one is in a state of peace grounded in the good of faith, he is in the Divine Providence. These alone know and believe that the Divine Providence of the Lord is in all and singular things, yea, in the most singular of all; and that it regards what is eternal. But they who are in the opposite principle are scarcely willing to hear Providence mentioned, but refer all and singular things to prudence; and what they do not refer to prudence, they refer to fortune or chance; some to fate, which they do not educe from the Divine but from nature,—calling those simple who do not attribute all things to themselves or to nature.” (A. C. 8478.)

XXIV.—*FREEDOM.*

There are several kinds of freedom which it is important to distinguish. There is natural freedom and spiritual freedom—freedom of the body and freedom of the soul; civil freedom and religious freedom; intellectual freedom and moral freedom; the freedom of heaven and the freedom of hell. But there is only one kind of true spiritual freedom; and this is freedom from the controlling influence of the selfish and evil proclivities of the unregenerate heart; freedom from the dominion of passion, appetite, avarice, hatred, love of self, and lust of power for selfish ends; a complete mastery over all the lower and selfish propensities of our nature, and a positive delight in the free and healthy exercise of our higher and nobler faculties. In other words, the true freedom is to yield ourselves willingly and joyfully to the prompting influences of heaven; to be led and governed in all our feelings, purposes and conduct, by the Lord and his angels, and not by self or the spirits that are imbued and swayed by the love of self. The true freedom, therefore, differs from the spurious, as hatred differs from love, good from evil, heaven from hell.

Such is the declared doctrine of heaven, and such the teaching of the New Church on this subject. Accordingly Swedenborg says—and the same teaching is many times repeated in his writings:

“All that is called freedom, which pertains to the will or love. Hence it is that freedom manifests itself by the delight of willing and thinking, and thence of doing and speaking; for all delight is of love, and all love is of the will. To do evil from the delight of love appears like freedom, but it is slavery because it is from hell. To do good from the delight of love appears like freedom, and also is freedom because it is from the Lord. Slavery, therefore, consists in being led of hell, and freedom in being led of the Lord.” (A. C. n. 9586.)

“The freedom of self-love and the love of the world and of the lusts thereof, is quite another thing than freedom, being altogether slavery; but still it is called freedom, just as love, affection and delight are called by these names, whether used in a good or bad sense. Nevertheless self-love and the love of the world are totally different from love, being in reality hatred.” (A. C. n. 2884.)

“There is heavenly freedom and infernal freedom. Heavenly freedom consists in being led of the Lord; and this freedom is the love of what is good and true. But infernal freedom consists in being led of the devil; and this freedom is the love of evil and falsity. They who are in infernal freedom think there is slavery and compulsion in not being allowed to do evil and think falsity at pleasure; but they who are in heavenly freedom dread to do evil and to think what is false, and are tormented if they are compelled to.” (A. C. n. 9589, '90.)

XXV.—CATHOLICITY.

Catholicity is not properly a *doctrine*, but rather a spirit or characteristic. Yet its presence in, or its absence from, any church or system of doctrines, is a pretty good indication of the general character of that system or church. Catholicity is the opposite of bigotry, or the narrow and exclusive spirit of sect. And the student of ecclesiastical history knows that sectarianism has been the bane of the Christian Church almost from its commencement. And although less virulent now than formerly, it still hovers around our ecclesiastical bodies, displaying its dark and repulsive shadow and causing its malign influence to be felt in nearly all the churches.

But the authorized teachings of the New Church are free from the least taint of anything like sectarianism. Their spirit is large, free, comprehensive, and inclusive as the angelic heavens—yea, as the Divine Love itself, of which they are a true revelation and grand expression. They do not teach nor encourage the belief, that the followers of the Lord are, or will ever be, all organized under one name, or worship according to one and the same ritual, or profess one and the same creed—unless, indeed, that creed

be extremely brief and simple. They teach us rather to expect endless variety in the church of Christ. Why should there not be? Variety is observable everywhere throughout the universe—visibly stamped on all created things. We see it alike in the stars above and in the earth beneath; alike in beasts and birds, forests and fields, mountains and clouds, fishes and flowers. And the writings of the New Church teach us to expect that there will ever be a like variety in the church of God—a variety in doctrine and ritual as well as in the kinds and degrees of goodness, corresponding to the variety among the organs of the human body. Such variety exists in the angelic heavens. Yet, with an endless diversity in character and in degrees of illumination there, the angels, by virtue of their kindred ruling purpose and their common union with the one true and living Head, are all bound as lovingly to each other, and work as freely and harmoniously together, as the various members of the human body. And we should expect that something like this will exist among men on earth when the life of God descends into the churches with power and fullness, or when the Father's will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

The great Apostle clearly justifies such expectation when he says: "The body is not one member but many;" and that the members ought to have "the same care one of another." A beautiful illustration of variety in unity! For what is more various in form and function than the multitudinous parts of the human body? Yet how closely and how lovingly are they all united, and with what perfect harmony do they work together, each rejoicing or suffering with all the rest! This illustrates Paul's idea of the church of Christ; for he adds: "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

But sectarianism is forever opposed to this catholic doctrine. It is unable to see how unity can co-exist with variety. It regards diversity as incompatible with harmony. In its own nature contracted and conceited, it cannot admit that there is any saving truth outside of its own formulas, or any real goodness different from its own variety, or any true church beyond its own narrow pale. It makes its own creed the test of all others, and approves or condemns according as they agree or fail to agree with this assumed standard. It never encourages independent and manly thought, nor invites to free and rational inquiry; for it knows that some degree of doctrinal difference is sure to result from this. On the contrary, it seeks by

various arts and endless machinery—by pains and penalties, social ostracism, church censures and withdrawal of fellowship—to discourage free inquiry, and compel a dead and barren uniformity. Sectarianism, therefore, is unfriendly alike to religious progress and Christian union. Its spirit is the spirit of anti-Christ ;—not large, generous, loving and all-embracing, but narrow, selfish, conceited and unprogressive.

The very opposite of all this are the spirit and doctrines of the New Church. These doctrines everywhere exalt charity or love above faith or belief, and teach us to judge people by their lives rather than by their creeds. They teach us to think and speak as kindly of those who differ from, as of those who agree with us in doctrine, and to regard and treat as brethren in Christ, all who exhibit a Christian temper and live a Christian life. They teach us that all who have the Master's spirit, are owned and accepted of Him ; that perfect agreement in forms of faith is neither to be expected nor desired ; that variety is the truly divine order in the moral no less than in the physical universe ; that the Word of God is an infinite Fountain where all souls may drink and be refreshed ;—a Fountain from which some may draw higher and purer, others lower and cruder, forms of truth, according to the purity of their motives, the strength of their trust, the measure of their obedience, and the completeness of their self-abnegation. They teach us that there are “ many mansions ” in the heavenly Father's house, corresponding to the many kinds and degrees of good in men, and to the many forms of faith or phases of truth ; and that all who earnestly seek to know and humbly strive to do his will, may be sure of an eternal abode in some *one* of the mansions prepared for the blessed.

Let such teaching as this be generally accepted and promulgated for Gospel truth (as it really is), and exemplified in the teachers' lives, and the mischievous spirit of sect would soon take its departure as owls and bats fly to their coverts at the rising of the sun. And in its place would come a broad and Christian catholicity, rejoicing the hearts of good men on earth and angels in heaven. Then, instead of antagonistic sects warring against and weakening each other, we should soon have one harmonious and united church,—a church all the more beautiful and perfect on account of its diversity, just as the excellence of a band of music is increased by the variety of instruments, or the beauty of a garden by the variety of its trees and flowers.

One might easily fill a volume with extracts from Swedenborg in confirmation of the above statements. But in lieu of quotations, we will simply refer the reader to Vol. III. of the "Swedenborg Library," pp. 73 to 205, where he will find the amplest justification of all that we have here said,—and teaching that forms a striking contrast, in point of catholicity, to that which has hitherto been offered and accepted in the Christian church.

XXVI.—*SPIRITUAL SPHERES.*

The doctrine of mental or spiritual spheres was unknown to the first Christian Church. And to the great majority of Christians even in our own day, it is entirely new. But nearly every one recognizes its truth as soon as it is clearly stated; yet not until it is thoughtfully pondered, can we expect one to see how important it is in a practical point of view.

It is easy to believe that there are particles too small for the eye to discern even by the aid of the most powerful microscope, constantly emanating from all material objects, and forming around each a kind of atmosphere which, in its essential nature, is similar to the object itself. This atmosphere is generally too refined and subtle to be detected by the senses; yet its existence round about thousands of objects, often manifests itself to the sense of smell; and in a dog this sense is so acute that he can scent his master's sphere in the print of his shoes, and distinguish his tracks from all others many hours after they were made. The perfume of the lily or the rose, is but the extension of the flower's own substance—the radiation or emanation of its own essence in the most subtle form. And so of all other objects that diffuse an odor, grateful or otherwise.

From the analogies of nature, therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that souls also have their encompassing spheres; and that these must be spiritual, and of the same quality in every case as the souls whence they emanate. We should expect that every mind would have an encompassing atmosphere similar in its essential nature to the mind itself; that thought, true or false—affection, good or evil—would have extension, and exert an unconscious influence upon other minds, healthful or baleful according to its own nature. We should expect that every heart would constantly carry with it its own sphere—a sphere more penetrating and powerful, especially in its effect on the young and persons oftenest within its reach, than

any oral or written instruction. We should expect, therefore, that there would be spheres of selfishness, hatred, conceit, pride, jealousy, avarice, contempt and revenge; spheres of doubt, fear, anxiety, melancholy, discouragement and despair; also spheres of an opposite character—spheres of love, joy, peace, humility, reverence, resignation and confiding trust; and that the particular character or quality of the spiritual sphere emanating from and encompassing each individual, would be in all cases according to the character of that individual—not according to his words or outward actions, unless these were in agreement with his internal feelings and purposes. The spiritual sphere being the unavoidable and unconscious outgoing of the individual's inner and real life, should be—*must* be—of precisely the same nature as that life; heavenly or hellish (in varying degrees) according as the life's love is angelic or infernal.

And any one of much spiritual discernment, or who is at all susceptible to the influence of mental spheres, if he has ever been long in the immediate presence of very saintly or very vile persons, knows from personal experience that what we have here spoken of as altogether reasonable, is actually true. In the humble cabin or poorly furnished chamber of some saintly soul, how many have often felt a sweet and heavenly peace as perceptibly as he ever smelled the perfume of clover-blossoms or new-made hay!—an experience inexplicable upon any other theory than that of the existence of spiritual spheres. Accordingly Swedenborg says:

“In the spiritual world the will or love of every one constitutes the whole man; and a sphere of life thence proceeds from him as an exhalation or vapor, and encompasses him, and makes as it were himself around him; like the effluvium encompassing vegetables in the world, which is also made sensible at a distance by odors; like that also encompassing beasts, of which a sagacious dog is exquisitely sensible.” (A. C. 10,130.)

“Man does not know that a certain spiritual sphere encompasses him according to the life of his affection, which sphere is more perceptible to the angels than a sphere of odor is to the most exquisite sense in the world. If his life has been in external things alone, viz., in pleasures derived from hatred against his neighbor, from revenge and consequent cruelty, from adultery, self-exaltation and the consequent contempt of others, from clandestine rapine, avarice, deceit, luxury and the like, the spiritual sphere which encompasses him is as foul and offensive as is the sphere of odor in the world arising from dead bodies, dunghills, stinking filth, and the like. The man who had led such a life, carries this sphere along with him after

death ; and because he is entirely in that sphere, he cannot be anywhere but in hell where such spheres exist.

“ But they who are in internal things, viz., who have had delight in benevolence and charity toward their neighbor, and especially who have found blessedness in love to the Lord, are encompassed with a grateful and pleasant sphere which is essentially celestial ; on which account they are in heaven. The spheres which are perceived in the other life, all arise from the loves and consequent affections in which the spirits had been principled, consequently from the life ; for loves and consequent affections make the very life itself. And since they arise from loves and consequent affections, they arise from the intentions and ends for the sake of which man so wills and acts. For every one has for an end what he loves ; therefore ends determine a man's life, and constitute its quality. Hence especially is his sphere.” (A. C. 4464.)

The same illumined author further says, that in the other world these spiritual spheres sometimes manifest themselves as odors—offensive or fragrant, according to the nature of the sphere ; “ for odors correspond to spheres.” The sphere of those who have acted the part of hypocrites so habitually that they have contracted a hypocritical nature, “ when changed into an odor, is like the stench of vomit,” this being the correspondence of such a sphere. And the sphere of those who have lived in hatred, revenge and cruelty, “ when changed into an odor, has the stench of a putrid carcass.” While “ such as have been immersed in sordid avarice, give forth a stench like mice.” But when the spheres of saintly souls—such as have lived in charity and faith—“ are perceived as odors, they are most delightful ; the odors are sweet and delicious like those of flowers and spices of divers kinds, with an indefinite variety.” (A. C. 1514, 1519.)

Now, let this doctrine concerning spiritual spheres be cordially accepted, and it is plain that its practical tendency and legitimate effect upon the receiver must be most salutary. It shows the parent and guardian and teacher and all who have the shaping of other minds, that it is not so much what they *seem* or *say* or *do*, as what they *are*—not what they are *outwardly* but what they are *inwardly*—not so much their oral instruction, wise or otherwise, as the vital currents of thought and feeling perpetually flowing forth from their innermost and ruling love, that moulds the character of those under their charge. Their own spiritual sphere—the unconscious but irresistible influence of their cherished thoughts and purposes—this, as a formative and educatory power, is vastly more potent than any

instruction by word or printed page. It is this spiritual atmosphere, extensive and far-reaching enough to encompass a multitude of younger and feebler minds, that the souls of our children are inhaling continually—day by day and hour by hour. How important, then, that this atmosphere be pure and sweet—as the breath of heaven fresh wafted from the throne of God!

XXVII.—*MARRIAGE AND THE SEXES.*

The institution of marriage has ever been held in honor by Christians generally; yet there are few subjects on which even educated people in nearly all the churches of to-day are more profoundly ignorant, or on which instruction is more needed, than the nature of true marriage; and none on which the teachings of Swedenborg have been more strangely misapprehended, or their meaning more grossly perverted.

A right understanding and thorough appreciation of the divine institution of marriage, will be found to be intimately connected with the best Christian nurture, and the fullest development of the Christian life and character. For the starting-point in the noblest human growth, and the chief centre of influence in the most advanced civilization, is unquestionably the family institution. And this institution can never become what God intended it should be—the birth-place and nursery of angels—save in the degree that it receives the enlightening and warming beams of the spiritual Sun; and the measure in which these beams are received, will depend on the degree in which husbands and wives understand and acknowledge the source and nature of true marriage, and on their mutual fidelity in the discharge of its sacred obligations.

It cannot be denied that an important change in the popular estimate of woman, has taken place throughout Christendom during the last hundred years. She has come to be thought of and treated more as the equal of man—more as the inspirer of his best thoughts and noblest deeds, and the equal partner in, and sharer of, his burdens, trials, duties and responsibilities. To fit her for this higher sphere, the opportunities for broader culture and higher education are everywhere beginning to be offered her. The doors of our best colleges and highest schools of learning, are being thrown open to her, and she is beginning to be admitted to their privileges on equal terms with her brothers. If this change has not been wrought di-

rectly by the writings of Swedenborg or their students, it cannot be denied that it is directly in the line of their teachings, and may be fairly claimed, therefore, as one of the normal results of the last Judgment and new Dispensation.

According to the teachings of the New Church, sex belongs to the soul not less than to the body ; and it is therefore eternal in its duration as the soul itself. And since the death of the body works no change in the soul, it leaves the sexes, with all their essential longings and characteristics, the same in the spiritual as they are in the natural world. And as it is the Lord's will that all orderly and innocent loves should be gratified, therefore there are marriages in heaven.

Marriage is regarded by the New Church as a most sacred institution, having its origin in the divine and eternal union of Love and Wisdom in the Lord, and being itself a faint image of that union. The spiritual or heavenly marriage is the conjunction of good and truth, or of love and wisdom, in the individual soul ; and this takes place in the degree that a man, through religious obedience to the truth received into his understanding, unites or *marries* that truth to love in the will ; and in so far as this takes place he is internally conjoined to the Lord, being created anew in the Divine image and likeness. Hence the Lord becomes (and is so represented in Scripture) the Husband of all regenerate souls ; and such souls form, in the aggregate, "the bride, the Lamb's wife." In the degree that man receives into his soul truth and love in marriage union, he receives the Lord, and experiences within himself the life and delights of heaven. Hence it is that heaven in the Word is compared to a marriage. (See Matt. xxii. 2, 4 ; xxv. 1, 10.)

Now as truth and love, from their very nature, or because of their divine union in Him from whom they flow, have a perpetual longing or affinity for each other, therefore man and woman are from their creation gifted with a similar desire for union ; and their marriage (provided it be a true one—a union of *souls* as well as of bodies) symbolizes or images the divine and heavenly marriage. The two sexes are the complements of each other, standing related like truth and good, understanding and will, lungs and heart ; and each, therefore, being absolutely necessary to the completeness of the other. Although each sex is actually in both man and woman (for each is gifted with understanding and will, and is capable, therefore, of receiving both truth and love), yet man is relatively a form of

the intellect or truth, and woman a form of the will or love ; for with the former, truth or the masculine element is exterior or predominant, and with the latter, love or the feminine element. And when a married couple on earth are fully regenerated—if they are from creation the complements of, and thus perfectly adapted to, each other—they are no longer two but one ; each living in and for the other, thinking, perceiving, feeling and enjoying as one mind. They are then “one flesh,” inseparably joined by God in their very constitution and mutual adaptation to each other, “like the angels in heaven ;” and their delights in the hereafter are ineffable and inconceivable.

But the natural love of the sex as felt by the merely natural man, is a low animal passion, more or less defiled with impurity, like all his other loves. But it is the germ or early blossom of something transcendently more beautiful and precious. The natural love of the sex is, by regeneration, purified, exalted, ennobled, and so changed into what Swedenborg calls “love truly conjugal,” which is a spiritual and heavenly love, the sweetness and felicities of which transcend immeasurably the delights of the love immediately succeeding the earthly nuptials.

Owing to the present disorderly and unspiritual state even of the Christian world, it is not to be supposed that there are at this time many true marriages, or unions that are “truly conjugal.” Nor will there be, until marriage is looked upon as the most solemn and momentous event of one’s earthly life, and sincere, devout and earnest prayer goes up from the hearts of young men and maidens, that in this most important step, involving perchance the peace and prosperity of multitudes yet unborn, they may be led and governed wholly by the Lord.

“Offspring born of those who are in love truly conjugal,” says Swedenborg, “derive inclinations and faculties (if a son), for perceiving the things of wisdom, and (if a daughter), for loving the things which wisdom teaches ; because the conjugal of good and truth is implanted by creation in the soul of every one, and also in the things derived from the soul. . . . Hence an aptness and facility for conjoining good to truth and truth to good, that is, for becoming wise, is inherited by those who are born from such a marriage ; consequently an aptness also for imbibing the things that are of the church and heaven, with which things conjugal love is conjoined. From which considerations reason may clearly see the end for which marriages of love truly conjugal have been provided, and are still

provided, by the Lord the Creator [for all, that is, who truly seek and devoutly pray for them].” (C. L. 204.)

We add a few brief extracts from Swedenborg in further elucidation of the subject.*

“The angels regard marriages on earth as most holy, because they are the seminaries of the human race and also of the angels of heaven, for heaven is from the human race; also because they are from a spiritual origin, namely, from the marriage of good and truth; and because the Divine of the Lord flows primarily into conjugal love.” (H. H. 384.)

“I once heard an angel describing love truly conjugal and its heavenly delights, in this manner: That it is the Divine of the Lord in the heavens,—which is the Divine good and divine truth,—united in two beings, yet in such a manner that they are not two, but as one. He said that two conjugal partners in heaven are that love,—because every one is his own good and his own truth, as to mind as well as to body; for the body is the effigy of the mind, because formed in its likeness. Hence he concluded that the Divine is effigied in two, who are in love truly conjugal; and because the Divine is effigied in them, so also is heaven.” (H. H. 374.)

“The essential of marriage is the union of minds. . . . And the union of minds is altogether such as are the truths and goods from which the minds are formed. Consequently the union is most perfect between minds that are formed of genuine truths and goods. It is to be observed that no two things mutually love each other more than truth and good. Therefore love truly conjugal descends from that love.” (Ibid. 375.)

“Love truly conjugal cannot exist between one husband and more wives than one; for this destroys its spiritual origin, which is the formation of one mind out of two. Consequently it destroys interior conjunction, which is that of good and truth, from which is the very essence of conjugal love.” (Ibid. 379.)

“It has been shown me how the delights of conjugal love progress toward heaven, and the delights of adultery toward hell. The progression of the delights of conjugal love toward heaven, was into blessednesses and felicities continually increasing in number, until they became innumerable and ineffable; and the more interiorly they progressed, the more innumerable and ineffable they became, until they reached the very blessedness and happiness of the inmost heaven which is the heaven of innocence, and this with the

* For a full and exhaustive treatment of this subject, the reader is referred to Vol. IX., Swedenborg Library, which treats of “Marriage and the Sexes in both Worlds.”

most perfect freedom. For all freedom is from love ; and therefore the most perfect freedom is from conjugal love which is heavenly love itself. But the progression of adultery was toward hell, and by degrees to the lowest where there is nothing but what is direful and horrible. Such is the lot which awaits adulterers after their life in the world." (Ibid. 386.)

XXVIII.—*THE RESURRECTION.*

The church in Swedenborg's day believed in the soul's immortality, yet had no clear conception of the soul as a substantial entity, or as existing in any definite form. The prevailing belief was, that it is something ethereal, subtle, shadowy,—a kind of breath or vapor which would, at some distant day, be re-united with its cast-off material body, and thereby reach its perfect state, regain its human form and attain a substantial existence.

And this resuscitation of the material body, or its re-union with the soul, is what Christians of that day understood by the Resurrection which the Bible speaks of. It was a purely materialistic doctrine, but in complete harmony with the sensuous philosophy and carnal conceptions prevalent at that period. And although this doctrine is still to be found in the creeds, and is often taught from the pulpit and in religious books, it is beginning to be rejected by the more thoughtful and intelligent classes in nearly all the denominations. It is openly denied by not a few religious journals and teaching ministers of the "evangelical" school.

To one who allows himself to think or reason at all on the subject, this old doctrine of the resurrection cannot but seem most unreasonable, and wholly inconsistent with all that is known of the laws of divine order, as well as with all that is suggested by the analogies of the material universe. There is nothing throughout the domains of nature, that bears the slightest resemblance to it. The crawling worm passes through successive states in the progress of its development, and finally emerges from its chrysalis, a beautiful butterfly, sporting among flowers and buoyant as the breeze it sails upon ; but it never resumes the *exuviae* that clothed it while a worm ; for, useful as that covering was while it crawled upon the earth, it needs it no longer now that it is able to fly in the air.

And the doctrine is fully as unscriptural as it is unreasonable. Not one of the texts cited in proof of it, when carefully examined and rightly understood, lends this doctrine the least shadow of sup-

port. This has been repeatedly and conclusively shown in works where this subject has been treated at greater length than it accords with the design of the present work to treat it.*

The New Doctrine.

We turn now to the new doctrine of the resurrection. According to the teachings of the New Church, *man* never dies. The material body dies, but *this* is not the man; *this* does not think, will, reason, or love. These and other human capabilities belong to the soul or spirit. And when the spirit is withdrawn from the body, all the bodily functions cease, and there supervenes what we call death. But the spirit which is the real man, still continues to live, but in the spiritual world, where all things are homogeneous with itself—that is, are spiritual. The spirit is in the human form and is a spiritual and substantial organism. It has feet, hands and other bodily organs, and senses far more acute than those of the body; and these senses are opened as soon as the body dies, so that the spirit sees and hears other spirits as men see and hear one another,—and has sensible perception of the things in the spiritual world as men have sensible perception of the things in this world. This agrees with Paul's teaching; for he says: "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body;" and in the same verse he declares that it is the *spiritual* body which experiences the resurrection. "A natural body is sown, a *spiritual* body is *raised*"—according to the correct translation of the original Greek; and he calls the man a "fool" who imagines that it is the material body—this outer garment of flesh which envelops us in this our earth-life—that is to attain unto the resurrection (1 Cor. xv., 36, 44).

The material body has no life of its own. It lives by virtue of the indwelling spirit. The spiritual body is within the natural during our life on earth, filling and animating every minutest part of it. But when the latter dies, the spiritual body, released from its clay tenement, enters upon a conscious state of existence in its own congenial realm;—still lives, with its senses all awake or opened, in its own world, and never resumes its material vestment. And the

* The reader is referred to "The World Beyond," by John Doughty (No. 1, of this series), pp. 24 to 40: "Noble's Appeal," pp. 43 to 100: Barrett's "Lectures on the New Dispensation," pp. 246 to 272:—for a critical examination of the texts of Scripture commonly cited or referred to in support of the old doctrine.

separation of the spirit from the incumbrance of gross matter, which takes place immediately after the death of the body, is what is meant, according to the belief and teaching of the New Church, by the resurrection. It is the *anastasis* or resuscitation of the *real person*, not the reconstructing and reanimation of the outer garment of flesh which had served him in this rudimental sphere.

That this is the true Scripture doctrine, appears plain from our Lord's own argument when proving to the unbelieving Sadducees the resurrection of the dead. For He declares to them that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were still living—and had, consequently, attained unto the resurrection—since their God “is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Matt. xxii. 32). Also from his words to the penitent thief: “To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise;” and from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the former of whom is represented as being in hell shortly after his decease, for he speaks of having five brethren still living in the natural world (Luke xvi. 28). And that we shall continue in the human form after the body dies, is proved by the appearance of Moses and Elias in that form on the mount of Transfiguration long *after* they had left the natural world, but long *before* the general resurrection day according to the old theory. For they were seen by the apostles when they were in vision (Matt. xvii. 9), that is, when their spiritual eyes were opened, and of course were seen in the spiritual world. Furthermore, whenever angels have been seen by men (as in the case of those seen by Abraham, Gideon, Manoah and John), they have always appeared in the human form; and sometimes they are called “men” (Luke xxxiv. 4).

And it accords with the dictate of reason as well as with the teaching of Scripture, that the human spirit, after its separation from the material body, should retain its human form. For we know that the form of every living creature is and must be in exact correspondence with that creature's essential nature or peculiar characteristics. We cannot conceive of the peculiar and distinguishing qualities of the fox, lion, horse or sheep, existing in any other forms than these animals have. And it is equally impossible to conceive of a being endowed with the human characteristics and capabilities, existing in any other than the human form. If the human faculties, therefore, which constitute the essential man or woman, continue to exist after the body dies (and if these do *not* exist, the *individual* does not), then people must be in the human form after death. And

their bodies must be spiritual (as Paul plainly teaches), else they would not be adapted to a realm where all things else are spiritual; just as our present bodies must be material, to be fitted for service in a world of matter.

There is another kind of resurrection of which the Scriptures speak, that must not be (though it sometimes is) confounded with that which we are here considering. It is a spiritual resurrection which takes place with all the humble followers of the Lord, on this side of the grave. It is the resurrection from a natural to a spiritual state of life;—from a state of sin or moral death, to a state of holiness; from the old, carnal, selfish life, to the new life of disinterested neighborly love which is the Lord's own life and the very essence of heaven. As the old man with his affections and lusts dies or is put off, and our inner man is renewed after the image of Jesus Christ, we rise to a new and higher life—to that which is meant by “the life eternal.” This is the kind of resurrection to which the Lord referred when He said: “I am the resurrection and the life;” and again: “The hour cometh and *now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.” When those who are entombed in selfishness and sin, hear (that is, *obey*) the voice of the Lord, they rise from their tombs to newness of life. This is salvation—“the first” or primary resurrection. Hence we read: “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection” (Rev. xx. 6).

XXIX.—*THE FIRST STATE AFTER DEATH.*

The New Church believes and teaches that every individual enters the spiritual world precisely the same, in disposition and character, as he was when in this world. Physical death works no change of character. And as men in the flesh are not altogether in heaven nor altogether in hell, but in a state intermediate between the two, so immediately after death they are in a similar intermediate state, called “the world of spirits.” And as society on earth is of a mixed character—the good and bad mingling together, because the internals of each one are covered over and hidden from the view of others—so is it also in “the world of spirits.” So *must* it be, unless physical death works some change of character, which is alike unreasonable and unscriptural.

Some persons are so fully regenerated, or rise so completely out

of the old into the new life, that they become fitted while on earth for the companionship of angels. They have thoroughly vanquished the life of self, and come into such close and blissful conjunction with the Lord, that they do not remain long in the intermediate state after death, but pass immediately into some kindred society in heaven. But there are very few of this class. Most people—even good people—do not become altogether fitted in this world for the society of angels. The ruling love may be right, yet the habits of thought, feeling and action—all the things of the outward life—have not yet been brought into perfect agreement with the spirit of heaven. Something of the old man still remains to be put off, before the life is altogether angelic. And among the unregenerate, few become so entirely depraved in this world as to be altogether devilish. Nearly all the wicked retain, while on earth, some good qualities—externally if not internally. Few are so thoroughly false and evil from centre to circumference, that they are fitted for the society of devils as soon as they enter the other world. So that the wicked—those who are internally such, yet have some external goodness appertaining to them—remain, for a greater or less time after death, in the intermediate state or world of spirits.

But the process by which the interiors are developed or uncovered, and the hidden things of one's life are made known, commences immediately after death, and proceeds with greater rapidity in the world of spirits than it does in this world. The change is comparatively like that which takes place with plants when removed from a cold to a tropical region, where they are brought under the more direct rays of the sun. And as the process goes on, whereby the interiors are laid open and the quality of each one's ruling love, which is his life, is revealed, his real character—that which he was interiorly while he lived on earth—becomes more and more manifest. Until finally the externals of every one are put off, or brought into perfect agreement with his internals, and he appears and is outwardly just what he is inwardly.

This process, whereby each one's character or ruling love becomes fully disclosed, takes place in "the world of spirits," and is what is meant by "the judgment" that every one must undergo after death. When this is accomplished, the individual is prepared for his final abode—among the angels in heaven or the devils in hell, according as his real character is angelic or infernal. He then goes freely and willingly to the society of those whose ruling love is most akin to

his own. For there, and only there, he finds a congenial home. His inner man (or “book of life”) is opened, and out of, or according to, it he is judged.

And here, in this intermediate state or world of spirits, is where those who had been friends and acquaintances on earth, meet and recognize each other, and remain together as long as their society is mutually agreeable. As the character of every one is the same on his first entrance into the other world as it was before his decease, so his voice, manners and looks are the same as before ; therefore he is readily recognized by those who had known him on earth. And if he desires to see any friend or relative who had died many years before, and who may have passed through the intermediate state to his final abode, his desire is gratified ; his friend is remitted into the world of spirits, which means that he is let into a state similar to what he was in when on earth, and in that state he looks, speaks and acts precisely as he did before he died ; and they are permitted to remain together as long as they desire. But if they are very different internally and spiritually, they will in a short time prefer to separate—each one going in freedom to the society of spirits most akin, and therefore most agreeable, to himself.

XXX.—*SPIRIT-SEEING—ITS PHILOSOPHY OR RATIONALE BRIEFLY EXPLAINED.*

In all ages and among all nations the belief has prevailed, not only in the existence of spirits, but in the possibility of their being seen of men in the flesh. And hundreds of well-authenticated cases of the appearance of spirits to men, have been placed on record. The Bible, also, makes frequent mention of angels, and sometimes of the spirits of deceased men, rendering themselves visible to persons yet in the earth-life.

Admitting, then, the well-established fact, that spirits and angels have often appeared to men on earth, how are such appearances to be accounted for ? The only rational and philosophical explanation of the fact, that we have ever met with, or indeed are able to conceive of, is that given by Swedenborg. It is obvious that spirits and angels, since they are spiritual beings and inhabitants of a spiritual realm, cannot be seen with the natural eyes nor heard with the natural ears ; for these senses are adapted to the natural world in

which we are now living, and are not at all suited to the spiritual world which is a discrete degree above the natural.

Accordingly, Swedenborg says that every man has a spiritual body within his natural or material body. That this spiritual body which is the real man that continues to live after death, is endowed with senses suited to the spiritual world as the natural senses are to the natural world. That these senses, ordinarily closed during our earth-life, are nevertheless capable of being opened while we live in the flesh ; and when opened, the individual is able to see and hear spirits as plainly as men see and hear one another, and to have sensible perception also of the light, objects and phenomena of the spiritual world. This is the way, he says, in which he was himself intronitted into the spiritual world—by the opening of his spiritual senses—and was permitted for so long a time to hold open intercourse with spirits of every class, and to become familiar with their character and surroundings, and with all the important facts, phenomena and laws of the spirit world. It was in a similar way that Paul was “ caught up to the third heaven,” and heard there words “ which it is not possible for a man to utter.” In a similar way, too, that he beheld *at midday*, when on his way to Damascus, “ a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun ; ” for that dazzling light was the light of the spiritual world beaming from the face of the Lord as a sun, which Swedenborg so often tells us is immensely brighter than the sun of this world. It was in a similar way, also, that the seer of Patmos saw myriads of angels, and heard their voices, when he “ was in the spirit ; ” and in a similar way that the disciples repeatedly saw the Lord after his resurrection—that is, by the opening of their spiritual eyes. This accounts for his appearing suddenly in their midst—“ the doors being shut ”—and as suddenly “ vanishing out of their sight.” (Luke xxiv. 31 ; John xx. 26.)

The Bible also testifies to the existence and the occasional opening of the spiritual senses in man. To refer here to a single instance—that of Elisha’s servant, who, rising early in the morning, beheld the residence of his master in the little town of Dothan, surrounded by the horses and chariots of the Syrian king, who had sent thither “ a great host ” to capture the man of God ; and in alarm he cried out : “ Alas, my master ! how shall we do ? ” And the prophet answered : “ Fear not ; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed and said : Lord, I pray thee,

open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord *opened the eyes* of the young man, and he saw : and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha '' (2 Kings vi. 15-18). It is plain that the "eyes" here spoken of, which the Lord opened in answer to Elisha's prayer, were not the eyes of that young man's body, but the eyes of his spirit ; and that the horses and chariots which he then beheld round about his master, were seen in the spiritual world, and represented, under the great law of correspondence, the strong and sure defence not only of Elisha but of all who put their trust in the Lord, and seek only to do his will.

Every one therefore, who reads the Bible, and will make himself acquainted with the pneumatology and psychology of the New Church, will find it easy to accept declarations like the following, which are of frequent occurrence in the writings of Swedenborg :

"That there is a spiritual world inhabited by spirits and angels, distinct from the natural world inhabited by men, is a fact which, because no angel has descended and declared it, and no man has ascended and seen it, has been hitherto unknown even in the Christian world. Lest, therefore, from ignorance of the existence of such a world, and the doubts about the reality of heaven and hell which result from such ignorance, men should be so infatuated as to become materialists and atheists, it has pleased the Lord to open my spiritual sight, and, as to my spirit, to elevate me into heaven and let me down into hell, and to exhibit to my view the nature of both." (Influx 3.)

But Swedenborg's intromission into the spiritual world in the manner alleged, was not a thing of his own seeking. It was of the Divine Providence, and for the accomplishment of a sublime and beneficent purpose. Otherwise such intromission would have been most perilous. Accordingly he teaches, and the New Church believes, that *to seek* open intercourse with spirits by breaking down the existing barriers between the two worlds, as not a few in our day are doing, is unscriptural, disorderly and dangerous.

"It is believed," says Swedenborg, "that man may be taught of the Lord by spirits speaking with him. But they who believe and desire this, do not know that it is connected with danger to their souls. Man, so long as he lives in the world, is as to his spirit in the midst of spirits ; yet the spirits do not know that they are with him, nor does the man know that he is with spirits. . . . But as soon as spirits begin to speak with him, they come out of their spiritual state into the man's natural state ; and then they know that they are with him, and conjoin themselves with the thoughts of his

affection. . . . Hence the speaking spirit is in the same principles as the man to whom he speaks, be they true or false; and likewise excites them, and by his affection conjoined to the man's, strongly confirms them. . . .

“From this it is evident to what danger a man is exposed, who speaks with spirits, or manifestly feels their operation. Man is ignorant of the quality of his affection, whether it be good or evil, and with what other beings it is conjoined; and if he is in the conceit of his own intelligence, his attendant spirits favor every thought thence derived. So it is, if any one is disposed to favor particular principles enkindled by a certain fire which belongs to those who are not in truths from genuine affection. When a spirit from similar affection favors a man's thoughts or principles, then one leads the other as the blind lead the blind, until both fall into the pit. The Pythonists of old were of this description; likewise the magicians in Egypt and Babylon.” (Ap. Ex. 1182.)

XXXI.—*CONCERNING HEAVEN.*

The idea which the Christian church in the middle of the last century entertained concerning the spiritual world, was extremely vague and indefinite—so much so, indeed, that it could hardly be called an idea. Multitudes were beginning to doubt, and not a few to deny, the immortality of the soul; and those who believed in it had no clearly defined idea of what the soul is or of its mode of existence after the death of the body. It was thought of as something ethereal, a kind of vapor or shadow, not as a substantial entity existing in any definite form. How, then, could there have been any other than the most vague idea concerning the realm which the soul enters when it leaves the body? And what could resist and drive back the in-coming tide of skepticism in regard to a life beyond the grave, but some further and trustworthy revelation of the sublime fact, accompanied with adequate rational evidence?

The Need of Swedenborg's Disclosures.

It is thought by some that any disclosures concerning the world beyond the grave, would be of no practical value even if true. Others think that heaven is above our human thought; and that therefore any revelation of its grand realities would be useless, because unintelligible to dwellers here on earth. But others, of profound thought and deep religious experience, have thought differently. Dr. William Ellery Channing, mourning over the feebleness

and increasing lack of faith even in the immortality of the soul, among Christians of his day, says :

“This faith is lamentably weak in the multitude of men. To multitudes, Heaven is almost a world of fancy. It wants substance. The idea of a world in which beings exist without these gross bodies, . . . strikes them as a fiction. What cannot be seen or touched, appears unreal. This is mournful, but not wonderful ; for how can men who immerse themselves in the body and its interests, and cultivate no acquaintance with their own souls and spiritual powers, comprehend a higher, spiritual life ? . . . This skepticism as to things spiritual and celestial, is as irrational and unphilosophical as it is degrading.” (*Works*, Vol. IV., p. 219.)

And how, or by what method, would this great thinker and writer strengthen the feeble and waning faith of Christians in the Hereafter, and bring the sublime doctrine of a future life home to men’s minds as a grand and inspiring reality ?

“This method,” he says, “is to seek some clearer, more definite conception of the future state. That world seems less real, for want of some distinctness in its features. We should all believe it more firmly if we conceived of it more vividly. It seems unsubstantial from its vagueness and dimness.” (*Ibid.*, p. 220.)

And the lack of distinctness in the features of the other world which the soul of Channing longed for, or thought so desirable, is beautifully and amply supplied by the disclosures made through Swedenborg. And we have only to subject these disclosures to a careful examination—to survey them, calmly and without prejudice, in the light of Scripture and reason and human experience and the accepted laws of our moral constitution, to be thoroughly convinced of both their truth and origin.

Discredited:—But by Whom ?

We are aware that Swedenborg’s claim to have so long enjoyed open intercourse with spirits and angels, and to have been divinely commissioned to reveal what he did concerning the other world, is discredited by many honest and intelligent people. This was to have been expected. And it is no more to be wondered at, than that the mass of the Jewish people should have discredited and rejected the Messiah whose advent their own prophets had foretold. Swedenborg himself foresaw that he would be discredited ;—that his alleged mission and professed converse with spirits, would encounter the derision of some, the disbelief of more, and be set down by not a

few as the impudent claim of an impostor or the hallucination of a fanatic. Thus he says near the commencement of his first published volume :

“ Many, I am well aware, will insist that it is impossible for any one to converse with spirits and angels during his life in the body ; many, that such intercourse must be mere fancy and illusion ; some, that I have invented such relations in order to gain credit ; while others will make other objections. To all such objections, however, I am quite indifferent ; for I have seen, have heard, and have had sensible experience of what I am about to declare.” (A. C. n. 68.)

And he tells us why this intercourse was granted him. It was, that the tide of skepticism in regard to the reality of a spiritual world, might be arrested ; that men’s faith in immortality might be strengthened and confirmed ; that the nature of both heaven and hell might be clearly understood ; and that men might be encouraged and helped on their heavenward way, by more definite and vivid conceptions of the Future Life. Referring to the prevalent ignorance among Christians respecting the spiritual world, he says :

“ The angels heartily rejoice that it has pleased the Lord at this time to reveal to mankind many things respecting heaven and hell ; and thereby to dispel, as far as possible, the darkness which is every day increasing.”

But it should be carefully borne in mind, that Swedenborg’s alleged intercourse with spirits has never been discredited *by any who have candidly and thoroughly studied his pneumatology, so as to fully comprehend it.* This is a fact worth considering. The Bible, we know, has been discredited, and its Divine authorship denied ; but rarely, we believe, by men who have reverently studied the Bible, and imbibed something of its divine spirit. Surely they who have studied the Bible most thoroughly, and heeded its precepts most reverently, are best qualified to judge of its character and claims. No value whatever, indeed, is to be attached to the opinion of those who have rarely if ever read the Bible. And if we apply the same rule to the multitude who discredit Swedenborg without having first studied him, what weight should we attach to their opinion ? Only those who have made themselves familiar with his teachings, are qualified to judge of their value or of the validity of their author’s claim ; and by *all* of this class, without a solitary exception of which we have any knowledge, the seer’s credibility is admitted and his claim conceded.

One other consideration.—He tells us that the almost constant sight of objects and spirits in the other world with which he was favored for so many years, occurred in states of full wakefulness, and was as vivid as the sight of men and objects in this world. Now, (1) he either had this experience and did actually see and converse with spirits in the manner alleged; or (2) he acted the part of a most villanous impostor—and this, too, without any adequate or conceivable motive; or (3) he was under a strange hallucination for nearly thirty consecutive years—all this time mistaking the things of his imagination for objective realities. We are inevitably shut up to one or the other of these conclusions.

But we presume not many intelligent people nowadays accept the second theory; for the seer's biography has been written—the latest and most complete, by Benjamin Worcester, because compiled from amplest and authentic documents—and is accessible to all. And do the passages quoted from his writings in the previous pages of this work, read like the teachings of one who was unable to distinguish facts from fancies?—of one who knew not the difference between subjective states and objective realities?—of one who could not even tell the difference between his own lively fancies, and the sights and sounds that he actually saw and heard? Yet this third theory is the one generally accepted by the philosophers (?) and scientists (?) and reputed sages of our times!—No: The first, which admits the seer's claim and the truth of his disclosures, is clearly the only rational and sensible theory. Admit this, and straightway all difficulties vanish.

The New Doctrine Concerning Heaven.

Let us look, now, at some of the things which have been revealed through Swedenborg concerning heaven, and see how far these justify the seer's claim. But we can scarcely do more than give a mere outline of these sublime revealings.

According to the new doctrine, then, as now revealed, the New Church believes and teaches that there is a spiritual world inhabited by spirits and angels, far more populous than the world in which we are now living, and as much more substantial, too, as the soul is more substantial than the body. All the inhabitants of that world were once dwellers on this or some other earth—having commenced their existence on the lowest plane of human life. They are not remote from men as to space, but are very near, and intimately associated with them as the soul with the body.

The good and the evil (for there are both classes in the other world, as there are in this) are soon separated there, forming two grand divisions, a heaven of angels and a hell of devils. And this is no arbitrary division, but one which takes place under and in accordance with the provisions of divine law, and with the full consent of all the inhabitants, whose best welfare the Divine Mercy perpetually wills, and is forever seeking ;—the welfare of the evil not less than that of the good, for all are alike subjects of the Divine regard.

Character of the Heavenly Inhabitants.

The angels, viewed collectively, are called heaven ; yet the essential constituent of heaven is the Divine of the Lord *in* the angels. In the degree that they receive His influent life, which is the life of unselfish love, and perceive and acknowledge that it is the Lord's life and not their own, they are blessed ; for they are all images and likenesses of Him, though in different degrees according to reception. No one can enter heaven, or remain there, unless he has something of heaven in himself ; for the essence of heaven is within the soul. (See Luke xvii. 21.) Those in the highest states (for the states of the angels are infinitely various) love others even better than themselves ; and their wisdom is equal to their love, being so superior to the wisdom of men, as scarcely to admit of comparison. They take the highest delight in communicating to each other all the good things they receive from the Lord, for such is the nature of true love ; and the more they give, the more are their souls opened to the influx of like things from the Lord, and the greater their delight. Swedenborg says :

“ Heaven is a communion of all good things, because heavenly love wills that what is its own should be another's. Consequently no one in heaven perceives his own good in himself as good, unless it be also in another. Thence also is the happiness of heaven. The angels derive from the Lord this dispositⁿ to communicate ; for such is the nature of Divine Love. That there is such communication in the heavens, has also been given me to know by experience.” (H. H. 268.)

They are in genuine innocence—the innocence of wisdom—which consists in a desire to be led and governed by the Lord in all things, and in the constant recognition of Him as the fountain of life, and the immediate giver of all the love and wisdom they possess. “ They love everything that is good, and are delighted with every-

thing that is true ; for they know that to love what is good, that is, to will and do it, is to love the Lord ; and to love what is true, is to love the neighbor.”

Such, briefly, is the character of the angels as revealed through Swedenborg—a character that is forever becoming more and more perfect ; for they are perpetually receiving fresh increments of intelligence and wisdom from the Lord, so that their progress in the heavenly life is unending.

Distributed into Societies.

The angels are not all equally wise and good ; consequently they do not all dwell together promiscuously, but are distributed or arranged in an order the most beautiful and perfect. In general there are three heavens, called celestial, spiritual, and natural. These are separated by discrete degrees, like the degrees of the human mind ; and like these, also, they communicate by correspondence. They are related to each other like end, cause and effect ; or like the three classes of persons connected with every well-arranged institution or enterprise on earth. These are : 1st. The persons who conceive and start the enterprise, and perhaps furnish the needed capital : 2d. Those who have the requisite knowledge to carry it forward to completion : and 3d. Those who do the work, or obey the directions of the knowing ones immediately above them. These three classes, which are to be found co-existing everywhere in the most advanced Christian civilization, are seen to stand to each other in the relation of end, cause and effect, and may serve as an illustration of the three angelic heavens. Viewed naturally, they are together on the same plane here, being all in the natural realm ; but viewed spiritually, as to intention, thought and intelligence touching the enterprise, they are on different planes separated by a discrete degree, yet each flowing into and animating the next below it ; and so the three classes act simultaneously by correspondence as one mind.

Then the angels of each heaven are arranged into innumerable societies, some of them consisting of myriads, others of thousands, and others still of some hundreds, of angels. There is nothing forced or arbitrary in this arrangement. Each one goes in freedom to the society of those who are most like himself, being drawn thither by the law of spiritual affinity which attracts and holds like ones together. There he is perfectly at home, being with those who

are in complete sympathy with him, and whom he seems to have known from earliest infancy. And as those of the same society are all in a similar kind and degree of good, there is a family likeness even in their faces ; for in heaven the face is a perfect index or mirror of the mind. There is an endless diversity among the heavenly societies, no two of them being in the same kind and degree of good and truth. In this respect they resemble the various organs of the human body, with which they perfectly correspond—so perfectly, indeed, that the whole heaven appears before the Lord as one man, and is often called by Swedenborg, *Maximus Homo*.

Does it seem absurd to speak of the whole heaven of angels as resembling one man, or to call heaven ‘‘ the Greatest Man ’’ ? There is no other conceivable way in which the exact truth could be so well or so concisely expressed. For the meaning is simply this : That the diversity, unity, harmony, mutual dependence, and perfect concert of action existing among the societies which constitute the whole heaven of angels, are similar to, and perfectly correspondent with, what are known to exist among the different parts of the human body. And were we seeking for something to illustrate the most perfect unity and harmony coupled with mutual dependence and the greatest conceivable variety, is not the human body the very thing we should select ? And as all parts of the body are nourished and vitalized by the same blood, so all the diverse angelic societies are pervaded and animated by one and the same Divine Spirit. The Lord’s own life is the animating principle—the very life-blood—of them all.

Time and Space in Heaven.

Time in the natural world is measured by some regular movement through space, as the hands of a clock, or the earth’s revolution on its axis or around the sun. In heaven there is no such time as this. There is an appearance of time there as here, but it is caused by, and is in correspondence with, the changes of state with the angels. Speaking of the apparent movement of the sun of our world, producing what we call time, Swedenborg says :

‘‘ It is otherwise with the sun of heaven. This does not, by successive progressions and revolutions, cause years and days, but to appearance changes of state ; and these not at regular intervals. Hence the angels have no knowledge of the things which belong to time, as a year, a month, a week, a day, an hour, to-day, to-morrow, yesterday. When they hear them named by man, they have, in-

stead of them, a perception of states, and of such things as relate to state. Thus the natural idea of man, is turned into a spiritual idea with the angels. Hence it is that times in the Word signify states ; and that the things which are proper to time, signify spiritual things corresponding to them." (H. II. 164, '5.)

It is easy to believe this, if we reflect upon what is happening every day in this world. When the mind is thoroughly absorbed in any subject, or agreeably entertained by genial company, we take no note of time. Hours pass, but they seem to us as minutes. Again, in moments of distressing anxiety, as when one's house is on fire or his child has fallen into the water, seconds *seem* as minutes and minutes as hours. And again in our dreams, we sometimes have the experience of days crowded into a few moments of natural time. In a few minutes we make journeys and accomplish deeds which it would require days, weeks, and even months to perform. All of which is so much evidence from our own experience, that in the spiritual realm there exists not what we call time, but state instead.

Nor does natural space exist in heaven ; yet things appear to be in space there, and people appear to go from place to place by the exercise of their powers of locomotion, the same as on earth. But this appearance results from a change of state, the visible correspondent of which is a change of place. When Paul was *caught up* to the third heaven, his body underwent no change of *place*, though there was doubtless the *appearance* to the apostle of his being lifted up through space. But in reality he only underwent a sudden change of state—the interiors of his mind being opened to the third degree. This is the way he was *caught up*—*up*, the same as *high*, meaning spiritually what is interior in the soul. So when the Lord says, "*come unto me*," etc., He is to be understood spiritually, as inviting us to come into sympathy with, or spiritual likeness to, Himself ;—to pass from *a state of mind* which is spiritually remote, into one which is spiritually near (that is, akin) to his own—and not from one *place* to another. Place corresponds to state ; and a change of place, therefore, corresponds to a change of state.

"Hence it is," says Swedenborg, "that, in the Word, by places and spaces and all things relating to spaces, are signified such things as belong to state. . . Nothing in heaven is estimated by spaces, but by states ; consequently spaces can only be seen there from and according to the state of the interiors of the angels." (H. H. 197, '8.)

"By changes in the state of my interiors, have I also been conducted by the Lord into the heavens, and likewise to the earths in

the universe. I was carried there as to my spirit only, my body meanwhile remaining in the same place. Thus do all the angels journey. They have no spaces nor distances, but instead of these they have states and their changes." (Ibid. 192.)

The Light and Heat of Heaven.

If heaven is a realm inhabited by thinking, loving, active, human beings, it were reasonable to expect there would be light and heat there suited to the wants of its inhabitants. Both reason and Scripture justify such expectation. And we should expect that these, like the light and heat of the natural world, would emanate from some central source. Paul, on his way to Damascus, saw "at *mid-day* a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun, shining round about him and them that journeyed with him" (Acts xxvi. 13); and he calls the appearance of that great light a "heavenly vision," which shows that he regarded it as the light of heaven. And the words he heard told him from whom came that dazzling light. Whence should come the light and heat of heaven, but from Him who is "the Light of the world"—the Illuminator of all minds—"the Sun of righteousness" (Mal. iv. 2)—the spiritual and living Sun? So did the Lord Jesus Christ appear to the disciples on the mount of transfiguration; for "his face shone as the sun, and his garments were white as the light." So, also, did He appear to John when he was "in the spirit;" "His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength" (Rev. i. 16). And it is plain that the light and heat from such a source must be spiritual in their nature; otherwise they would not be suited to the condition and wants of spiritual beings. And what can spiritual light and heat be, but the light of Divine truth which illumines the understanding, and the warmth of Divine love which sets the heart aglow? Accordingly Swedenborg says:

"That there is light in heaven cannot be comprehended by those who think only from nature; when yet the light there is so great as to exceed by many degrees the midday light of the world. I have often seen it in the evening and night. . . . Its whiteness and brilliancy surpass all description. The things seen by me in heaven, were seen in that light, and more clearly and distinctly than things in the world."

"The light of heaven is not natural like that of the world, but spiritual; for it proceeds from the Lord as a sun, and in its essence is divine truth. And the heat of heaven is spiritual, as well as its

light, for it is from the same origin ; and this heat in its essence is love.”

“The heat of heaven, like its light, is everywhere various. That in the celestial kingdom differs from that in the spiritual ; and it differs also in every society. And it differs not only in degree, but even in kind,—being more intense and pure in the celestial than in the spiritual kingdom of the Lord, because the angels there are more receptive of the divine good.” (H. H. 126, '7, '34.)

Changes of State in Heaven.

According to Swedenborg, the angels are not constantly in the same state. Sometimes their love is more intense than at others, and their perception of truth consequently more clear. When their love is most intense, they are in their most luminous and delightful state ; but when it is least intense, they are comparatively “in shade and cold, or in their state of obscurity and undelight. From the latter state they return again to the former ; and so on.” And the various objects which appear before their eyes, “are also changed with the states of their interiors ; for the things without them assume an appearance corresponding to those within them.” Thus they have their morning, noon, and evening states ; but “there is no correspondence of *night* with the states of those in heaven,” only “of the twilight which precedes the morning,”—the correspondence of night being only with the states of those who are in hell.

The Appearance, Garments, Habitations, and other Surroundings of the Angels.

Swedenborg sometimes speaks of the personal appearance of the angels, and says their beauty is indescribable ; but some are more beautiful than others—their beauty depending on the degree of fullness with which they receive into their hearts the Lord’s love and wisdom. It is this which moulds their features into forms of such exquisite grace. Their beautiful faces correspond to their beautiful souls, of which their faces are the true and faithful mirrors. And the more perfectly they receive the Lord’s life, “so much the more perfect human forms do they become ; and at length so perfect that their beauty exceeds all belief. Should one see them he would be amazed ; for they are celestial loves and charities in form, which is the truly human form. The reason is, that the divine in heaven is the Lord ; and they who receive from Him divine truths in good, are images of Him.” (A. C. 9503.) Again he says :

‘The human form of every one after death, is the more beautiful the more he had interiorly loved divine truths, and lived according to them ; for the interiors of every one are opened and formed according to his love and life. Therefore the angels of the inmost heaven are the most beautiful. . . I have seen the faces of angels in this heaven, which were so beautiful that no painter could ever impart to colors such animation as to equal a thousandth part of the brightness and life that appeared in their faces.’ (H. H. 459.)

And the objects in heaven which the angels behold, and in the midst of which they dwell, are similar to, yet far more beautiful and perfect in form and more abundant in number than, the objects seen on earth ; but they are all spiritual in their nature, else they would not be suited to the wants of spiritual beings. The angels are clad in most beautiful garments, but some more beautiful than others, according to the measure of the wearer’s intelligence—for this is what their garments correspond to. “The most intelligent have garments that glitter as from flame, some those that shine as from light ; the less intelligent have bright and white garments without splendor ; and the still less intelligent have garments of various colors.” And “their garments are changed as their states change.” (H. H. 178, 181.)

The angels also dwell in houses more or less magnificent according to the state of each one ; for the house in heaven, with all its furniture and decorations, is the correspondential image of the occupant’s interior state. But the houses there are not built like houses in the world, but are given to the angels *gratis* by the Lord. They also change a little from time to time, as the states of the angels change. Swedenborg speaks of some of the palaces he saw in heaven as “magnificent beyond description.” And “the splendor without was equalled by the magnificence within. The apartments were ornamented with decorations which no language can adequately describe.” But such things delight the minds more than the eyes of the angels, “because in everything they see correspondences, and by them things divine.”

The scenery, too, by which the angels are surrounded, is described as far more magnificent than any ever seen on earth. Hills and valleys, fountains and streams, gardens and groves, trees and flowers, clustering vines and delicious fruits, “such as were never seen in the natural world”—“all of such beauty as no language can describe.” And all their beautiful surroundings are but the embodied forms of their own wise thoughts and sweet affections—a mirror

reflecting with mathematical precision, under the great law of correspondence, the living and lovely things within their own souls. They are created and exist through the angels, and are in exact correspondence with their internal states; and they change, therefore, as their states change—the outward or phenomenal world in heaven, being always in correspondence with the internal states of its denizens.

Government and Worship in Heaven.

As there are societies in heaven, some of them consisting of many hundreds of thousands of angels, and as all in any society are not equally wise, we should expect to find some kind of government there; and we should expect, also, that the wisest and best of the angels would be appointed to administer the government,—those who are least in the love or thought of themselves, and most in the thought and love of serving, and who best know *how* to serve. We should further expect that the fitness of every one for the particular governmental position he is called to fill, would be perceived and acknowledged by all, and that all administrative powers would be so kindly and wisely exercised, that nothing like friction would be felt in the working of the machinery, but that all would move on as smoothly and harmoniously as the machinery in a loving family or a healthy human body. We should expect this, from the character of the angels as already described (pp. 125, '6), as well as from the perfection of their social organization. And we should further expect that the government would not be the same in every society, but would vary to suit their various states.

Now, all this (and much more of like character) which seems so reasonable, is precisely what has been revealed through Swedenborg on the subject. He says “there are governments in heaven,” and that these are “various,” different in the higher from what they are in the lower heavens, and “differing also according to the ministries performed by each society.” But “they all agree in this: That they regard the general good as their end, and in that the good of every individual.” This results from the fact that all in heaven are under the auspices of the Lord, “who loves all, and from divine love ordains that the common good shall be the source of good to every individual.” And of the governors, he says: “They are in love and wisdom more than others; and they will well to all from love, and from wisdom know how to provide that the good they desire may be realized.” And being of this character,

“they do not domineer or command imperiously, but minister and serve. . . . Nor do they account themselves greater than others, but less, for they put the good of society and of their neighbor in the first place, but their own good in the last.” They live in magnificent palaces and in more elevated situations than others, accepting the honor conferred on them, “not for the sake of themselves but for the sake of obedience ; for all in heaven know that honor and glory are from the Lord, and that for this reason they ought to be obeyed.” So that the government in heaven is altogether one of mutual love and service.

There are also temples for worship in heaven ; “for the angels are being continually perfected in wisdom and love,” and social worship there as here is one of the divinely appointed means of growth in grace. Swedenborg says that he was several times permitted to enter their temples and listen to the discourses, “which were fraught with such wisdom that none in the world can be compared with them,” all the preachers being “in interior light.” The doctrines there preached “agree as to essentials,” of which the most essential is the Divine Humanity of the Lord, and are “suited to the perception of the angels in each heaven ;” but the preaching is more replete with wisdom in the superior or inmost heaven, than in the others. The truths taught there, “all regard life as their end,” and are at once perceived and acknowledged by the hearers to be true. And “the truths which they perceive, they also love ; and by living according to them, they incorporate them into their lives. To live according to truths, they say, is to love the Lord.”

“But real divine worship in heaven does not consist in frequenting temples and listening to sermons, but in a life of love, charity and faith according to doctrine. Sermons in the temples serve only as a means of instruction in the conduct of life. I have talked with the angels on this subject ; and they said that going to church, hearing sermons, attending the sacrament of the holy supper, etc., are externals which ought to be observed, but are of no avail unless there be an internal from which they proceed ; and that this internal is a life according to the precepts which doctrine teaches.” (H. H. 222.)

Children in Heaven.

It is not uncommon nowadays to meet with even professed Calvinists who do not know, and will stoutly deny, that their church ever believed a doctrine so revolting as that of *infant damnation*. Yet so prevalent was this belief in all branches of the Christian

church, both Catholic and Protestant, prior to Swedenborg's time, that the few who rejected it were counted as heretics.* Yet this old doctrine finds few believers now in any of the churches, though it is still taught (by implication, at least) in some of the creeds. It belongs to the Old Christian Age which is fast passing away, and is part and parcel of that huge heap of theological error which had been accumulating for fifteen centuries, and which finally brought the former Christian Church to its end, and made a New Dispensation necessary.

Why is it that this old but once prevalent belief has become so unpopular in our time, and now looks so hideous to everybody? Why does it everywhere shrink from exposure, and anxiously seek to hide its head? Why is it no longer proclaimed from the pulpit, or defended in theological treatises, or owned and accepted even by stanchest Calvinist? Why, indeed, but because new light has dawned on the world, making more and more manifest the things of darkness? Why, but because heaven has been opened, and the rejoicing beams of the spiritual Sun have begun to penetrate the dark corners of the earth, and compel the creatures of the night to retire to their hiding-places?

Yes: It is plain to the most superficial observer, that we are living at the commencement of a NEW AGE—an Age of general and rational enlightenment. The things of the Old Age are gradually passing away, and all things are being made new, agreeable to Divine promise (see Rev. xxi. 5). It is the time of the second appearing of Him whose advent was foretold, and which it was promised should be “as the lightning which cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west.” It is the dawn of that great day when, as the prophet says, “a man shall cast his idols of silver and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty” (Isa. ii. 20, 21). And as the light of this New Dispensation becomes more and more diffused, it needs not the gift of prophecy to foresee that the time is not distant when it must fare with

* If the reader doubts this, let him consult a small work by the author, published in 1855, entitled, “Beauty for Ashes,” and the many and high authorities there cited in Part I. cannot fail to dispel his doubts.

some other doctrines—still held by multitudes in good repute—as it has already fared with the old doctrine of the damnation of infants.

Listen, now, to the revealed doctrine of the New Church on this subject. According to this doctrine, *all* who die in infancy and childhood, go directly to heaven ; that is, they pass immediately into some one of the angelic societies, and are so instructed and governed by the angels, that they all in due time become angels. Nor does this depend on the character of their parents, as whether they are righteous or wicked, in the church or out of it, Christians or Pagans ; nor upon the circumstance of their having received the rite of baptism or not. They are not angels immediately after their decease, for they lack the intelligence and wisdom which angels have. Or, they are rudimental angels, as little children on earth are rudimental men and women. They have the same spiritual organism, and consequently the same infantile forms and infantile minds, that they had while in the world. But they do not forever remain infants. They advance there to the full stature of men and women. They *grow* by the assimilation of spiritual substance, as children in this world grow by the assimilation of material substance ; for the bodies of both angels and men, are formed of the substances belonging to their respective worlds.

But children in heaven do not grow *old* as they do in this world. They never advance there beyond the period of early manhood or womanhood, but retain forever the freshness and bloom belonging to that age. But they must attain the fullness and perfection of the angelic form, in order that they may receive angelic life in its fullness, or have their human faculties unfolded, strengthened and perfected in the highest degree. For in the normal condition of all living objects, the form must correspond to the essence ; and the perfection and fullness of angelic life could no more be given to the immature form of a little infant, than the savory qualities of the peach full-grown and ripe, could be imparted to the germ of that fruit as soon as the blossom has fallen.

Little children, immediately after death, “are conveyed to heaven and delivered to the care of angels of the female sex, who in the life of the body loved children tenderly, and at the same time loved God. These angels receive them as their own ; and the little ones, from an implanted affection, love them as their own mothers ;” so that they never feel forlorn or homesick. All their wants are abundantly supplied. They are tenderly cared for, and so wisely governed

that their hereditary evils are never aroused into activity. They witness no exhibitions of turbulent passion ; they hear no profane or angry words ; they look upon no wicked deeds. They are enveloped in an atmosphere of the tenderest and sweetest love. Love breathes in every tone they hear ; love beams in every face they see ; love moulds the forms, and prompts the words, and shapes the deeds of all around them. Even the gardens, trees and flowers, and all the beautiful objects, that greet their senses, are but the embodied forms of the sweet affections and noble thoughts that are poured into their innocent and receptive minds in a constant, fresh and living stream. And recently the heavenly methods of instructing little children, as revealed through Swedenborg, have begun to be adopted by our best earthly educators, and in our most advanced Christian communities.

Such is a meagre outline of the doctrine revealed for the New Church concerning children after death. Is there anything unscriptural or unreasonable in it?—anything to awaken a doubt about its truth? Then how does it look by the side of the Old doctrine on the same subject?

A Heaven for the Heathen.

Up to the time when Swedenborg wrote, it was a part of the current creed of Christendom, that salvation for any but Christians was quite out of the question ; that all in heathen lands, therefore, unless converted to the Christian religion, must perish everlastingly. This belief was one of the legitimate offspring of the generally accepted doctrines of a vicarious atonement and salvation by faith alone. For these doctrines, and even the particular form in which they were held, being regarded as absolutely *essential to salvation*, the damnation of all unconverted heathen followed as a logical conclusion. For how could people believe in a vicarious atonement, who never heard of a crucified Redeemer? Yet, for not believing in that of which they never heard, millions of human beings (so Christians believed and taught) must be shut out of the kingdom of heaven, and forever suffer the torments of the damned !

One can hardly conceive of a more unreasonable or revolting doctrine than this, or one more derogatory to the character of the Heavenly Father. And in what a sad and unenlightened state must the Church have been, when such a belief could be generally entertained ! Every one who allows himself to think apart from his

creed, or who consults the feelings and intuitions of his better nature, knows that such a doctrine cannot be true: for if true, it would stamp the supreme Ruler of the universe as the most abominable of tyrants. The Sacred Scripture, enlightened reason, our sense of justice, and every tender and humane sentiment, are alike opposed to such an idea.

And these same witnesses further concur in teaching, that He who is Love itself and Wisdom itself could not create beings capable of blissful conjunction with Himself, and then leave them without the means or possibility of attaining to that conjunction. Such a thing would be against his very nature. The benevolence of his character is a perpetual guarantee that He will leave none of his intelligent creatures without the means of salvation. There must be, therefore, in every nation and for every people endowed with an immortal nature, some form of religion and worship, and some truths which, if religiously obeyed, will bind the creature to the Creator, and save him from sinking into the realms of darkness. And a complete history of the various religions on earth, or a full account of their doctrinal teachings, would show that such is actually the case; for some vital truths—some simple precepts inculcating a life of charity—would be found interwoven among them all. And obedience to these truths must, therefore, develop some degree of heavenly life in the receiver, and consequently save him in that degree.

Now, what has been revealed through Swedenborg concerning the Heathen in the other world? This will tell what the New Church believes and teaches on this subject. The following brief extracts will show what he teaches, and what the New Church, therefore, believes respecting the salvation of the heathen:

“It is a common opinion that those born out of the church, who are called Heathen or Gentiles, cannot be saved, because they have not the Word, and are therefore ignorant of the Lord, without whom there can be no salvation. Nevertheless it may be known, from these considerations alone, that they also are saved: That the mercy of the Lord is universal, that is, extended toward every individual: that they are born men as well as those within the church, who are comparatively few; and that it is no fault of theirs that they are ignorant of the Lord.

“Every person who thinks from enlightened reason, may see that no man is born for hell; for the Lord is love itself, and it is agreeable to his love that all be saved. Therefore also He has provided that all shall have some kind of religion, and thereby be in the acknowledgment of a Divine, and in the enjoyment of interior life.”

“That Gentiles are saved as well as Christians, may be known to those who understand what it is that makes heaven in man. For heaven is in man; and those who have heaven in themselves enter heaven after death.” (H. H. 318, 319.)

“It is provided by the Lord that those whom the Gospel cannot reach, but yet some religion, may likewise have a place in heaven, . . . and that they may live in heavenly joy as well as others. It matters not whether a person be in such joy as is experienced by the angels of the highest or the lowest heaven, since every one who is received into heaven, enters into the supreme or full joy of his heart.” (D. P. 254.)

How are the Denizens of Heaven Occupied?

The apostle to the Hebrews speaks of a *rest* that “remaineth to the people of God,” and of the righteous “entering into his rest” (iv. 9, 10). And it is said in the Revelation that “the dead who die in the Lord,” are “blessed,” and that they “rest from their labors” (xiv. 13). Putting a merely sensuous interpretation upon passages like these, Christians have concluded that in heaven there will be a total cessation from every kind of work, and that the “rest” of which the Bible speaks, is the rest of inaction; consequently that the life of the saints in heaven will be an eternal Sabbath, somewhat after the Jewish or Puritan type.

Contrary to this, the writings of the New Church teach that there are innumerable employments in heaven—so many, indeed, that “those on earth are comparatively few.” But they are all spiritual employments, that is, employments having regard to the spiritual protection, guidance, progress and edification of human beings, in both worlds. Every one is there engaged in the particular work which he loves, and which his special gifts qualify him to do best; and he works at it, not unwillingly nor from a selfish love of honor or gain, but from love of and delight in the use; and “when use is spoken of, the Lord also is meant, because use is good, and good is from the Lord.” Swedenborg says:

“All in heaven are in the delight of their occupation, and labor from the love of use, and no one from the love of self or gain. Nor is any one influenced by the love of gain for the sake of maintenance, because all the necessities of life are given them *gratis*;—their habitations, garments and food.” (H. H. 393.)

Thus the heaven which Swedenborg tell us of, is altogether a human heaven; involving the existence, therefore, of all kinds of

affairs properly human—ecclesiastical, civil, social and domestic—and their necessary administration. Ecclesiastical affairs there, are in charge of those “who, when in the world, loved the Word and earnestly searched for the truth it contains,” not for the sake of honor or gain, but for the improvement of their own and other’s lives; and these are “in the light of wisdom according to their love of use, for they come into that light there from the Word.” And their civil affairs are administered by those “who, while in the world, loved their country and its general good in preference to their own, and did what is just and right from a love of justice and rectitude,” that is, from a love of use, and not from the love of honor or greed of gain.

Now, what can be more reasonable than this? We were evidently created to be *forms of use* in the kingdom of God. And we can fulfill the purpose of our creation, only by the active exercise of our God-given faculties in the doing of something useful. A life devoted exclusively to oral prayer and psalm-singing, would be an utterly useless life; and if any one imagines it might be a *happy* life, let him try the experiment for a single week, and he will be convinced of his mistake. And if such a life on earth would be neither useful nor happy, why should it be in heaven?

No: the highest happiness here is realized by those who devote themselves most faithfully and unselfishly to the performance of the highest uses of which they are capable. And if such be the condition of happiness on earth, then why not also in heaven?

It is into such faithful, active, use-loving souls, that the Divine life flows most freely; and it is the influx of this life which brings heavenly peace and rest;—not the rest of idleness or inaction, but rest from all the harassing doubts and tormenting fears and turbulent passions and corroding anxieties and worldly cravings which make the unregenerate heart “like the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.”

The Happiness of Heaven.

Swedenborg says that heavenly joy and bliss, “such as it is in its essence,” is indescribable, being in the inmosts of the angels, and thence diffusing itself throughout their whole being.

“It is as if their interiors were wide open and free to receive delight and blessedness, which is distributed to every single fibre, and thus throughout the whole frame. The perfection and sensation of

delight and blessedness thence resulting, surpass all description.” (H. H. 409.)

And that he might have some idea of the delights of heaven, he says he was “often and for a long time permitted to have a living experience of them.” And he thus relates his experience :

“I perceived that the joy and delight came as from the heart, diffusing themselves very gently through all the inmost fibres, and thence into the collections of fibres, with such an inmost sense of enjoyment that every fibre seemed as it were nothing but joy and delight ; and thence all the perceptive and sensitive faculties seemed in like manner alive with happiness. The joy of bodily pleasures compared with those joys, is as coarse and offensive grime compared with the pure and sweetest aura. And I observed that when I wished to transfer all my delight to another, there flowed in a more interior and abundant delight in place of the former.* And the more intensely I desired to do this, the more abundant was the influx of that delight ; and this I perceived to be from the Lord.” (H. H. 413.)

All of which agrees with and confirms the teaching of Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians.*

XXXII.—*CONCERNING HELL.*

What the generally accepted doctrine concerning hell was, at the time Swedenborg wrote and for many years thereafter, is well known. True, it was the doctrine of the Bible—but of the Bible as understood by those who “perceive not the things of the spirit of God”—of the Bible as interpreted by the carnal mind, and in accordance with the gross conceptions of the natural man, and the sensuous philosophy of the old Age. It was a literal fire-and-brimstone hell which the church of that day believed in. And no doubt this was the doctrine best suited to the external and low state of the people of that period.

But that Age is consummated ; and doctrines well enough adapted to its condition and needs, being in complete correspondence with its sensuous character, are by no means suited to this new and more enlightened Age. The old doctrine of a literal fire-and-brimstone hell,

* For a full and detailed exposition of the New Church teachings on the subject treated in this chapter, the reader is referred to Vol. II. of the Swedenborg Library, which treats exclusively of HEAVEN.

into which sinners were supposed to be cast by an angry God, there to writhe in endless agony, would not now be listened to by any intelligent congregation in Christendom. Consequently the old doctrine is rarely heard from the pulpit of to-day, or encountered in our current religious literature. Thoughtful people must have a different doctrine on this subject, to satisfy the demands of their reason, or—no doctrine of hell at all ; and not a few are coming to accept the latter alternative. And as ministers of the Gospel generally have no distinct idea as to what hell really is, nor feel able to interpret with accuracy the texts of Scripture which speak of it, therefore they prudently refrain from saying anything about it ; or if they touch the subject at all, it is very lightly, and in a general way, as if it were something they know but little about, and therefore do not care to meddle with. Very different this, from the custom of the clergy a century ago, when hell formed the chief staple of so many pulpit discourses.

The New Doctrine.

In view, then, of the doctrine held and taught a hundred years ago, it is clear that a further revelation on this subject was needed, and was therefore to have been expected ; since God in his merciful providence, is always sure to give the things which his children really need, as soon as they are in a state to receive and profit by them.

And what is the doctrine on this subject as revealed for the New Church ? It should be rational and spiritual as well as Scriptural, else it would not meet the demands of this New Age.

According to Swedenborg, hell (like heaven) is essentially a state of life. As the kingdom of heaven is spiritual—within the soul (Luke xvii. 21)—so likewise is the kingdom of hell. It is a state in all respects the opposite of heaven—as opposite as night is to day, darkness to light, hatred to love, sin to holiness. Even the literal sense of the words *heaven* and *hell*, in the original languages of the Bible, is proof of this,—the former meaning a high and light, and the latter a low and dark, place. And as place corresponds to state, these terms, interpreted by the revealed law of correspondence, denote opposite states of life,—the one elevated, luminous and pure, the other low, dark and degraded. As love of the Lord and the neighbor is the essential constituent of heaven, so the love of self and the world is the essential constituent of hell. This latter love is

what is meant by the *fire* of hell spoken of in Scripture, for such love is what this fire corresponds to. As the Lord (or his unselfish love) reigns and rules in heaven, so the love of self, which is the fountain and father of all other evil loves, is the ruling principle in hell. As the angels love and worship the Lord alone, so the devils love and worship none but themselves. As heaven is the abode of light, love, joy, and the serenest peace, so hell is the abode of falsity, hatred, gloom, and perpetual strife.

Thus the character of the devils is altogether opposite to that of the angels. The former are inverted, while the latter are true, images of the Lord. The faces of the devils, too, are hideous as those of the angels are beautiful—each being in perfect correspondence with their ruling loves. Yet such is the abounding mercy of the Lord, that the devils as seen in their own light, do not appear hideous to themselves or to each other, but only when viewed in the light of heaven. So is it with thieves, robbers, pirates, pimps—all demons in the flesh : they do not appear to themselves or to each other as the morally deformed creatures that they are.

And precisely the same law that governs the phenomenal world in heaven, governs that in hell also—the great and eternal law of correspondence. Under the operation of this law, the surroundings of the devils are necessarily barren and dismal—and most offensive to the eyes of angels. They dwell in the midst of desert places, rocky and dreary wastes, stagnant marshes, in the meanest hovels and with the filthiest surroundings, and inhale the vilest stenches. But these things are not offensive to the devils any more than carrion is to crows, or mire to certain animals that love to wallow in it ; for they agree with their nature, being in perfect correspondence with their vile and filthy loves.

The same law, too, that determines the angels into innumerable societies, is alike operative in hell ; that is, the law of spiritual affinity. For there are endless kinds and degrees of evil as there are of good, and numberless societies therefore in hell ; and the devils go (as do the angels) in perfect freedom into the society of those most nearly like themselves ; for there they are most at home, and there they *prefer* to be. If they were convened to heaven, having in themselves none of the loves or life of heaven, their torment would be excruciating ; they could not breathe that pure atmosphere, and they would writhe there like serpents on coals of fire.

There is government also in hell ; but it is a government of force

and fear, for no other is adapted to beings who are supremely selfish. It is only through fear of punishment that their evil passions can be restrained. And by means of punishment the external order of the hells, if not their internal quality, is being continually improved. Swedenborg says :

“ The Lord never sends any one into hell, but desires to bring all *out* of hell ; still less does He inflict torment. But as the evil spirit himself rushes into it, the Lord turns all punishment and torment to some good account. There would be no such thing as punishment if *use* were not the end aimed at by the Lord ; for his kingdom is a kingdom of ends and uses.” (A. C. 696.)

“ Every one’s life follows him after death, and he remains in the state which he had procured to himself by the whole course of his life in the world. Then he who is in evil, is no longer capable of . . . being amended interiorly, but only as to his exteriors, and this through fear of punishment, which, being often repeated, compels the spirit at last to abstain from evil, which he does, not from freedom but by compulsion—the lust of doing evil still remaining. This lust is held in check by fears, which are the external and compulsive means of amendment. Such is the state of the wicked in another life.” (A. C. 6977.)*

XXXIII.—*CONNECTION OF THE TWO WORLDS.*

There are many passages in the Bible which point to the close connection of the spiritual with the natural world ; and Swedenborg often speaks of this connection,—of the intimate association of both good and evil spirits with men, and their influence upon them. As to our spirits, he says, we are actually in the spiritual world now and always, though all unconscious of the fact. Invisible companions are constantly associated with us, and powerfully operate upon our thoughts and feelings, our ends and aims, influencing us for good or for evil according to our own internal leanings, that is, according to our willingness to yield to the whispers of the Spirit and the promptings of unselfish love, or to the suggestions of selfishness or worldly greed. Every soul on earth is in near relation with other souls, most of whom have laid aside their fleshly covering, and are

* For a more extended treatment of this subject, the reader is referred to the author’s “ New View of Hell : Its Nature, Whereabouts, Duration,” etc.

no longer visible to the eye of sense ; for the natural eye can see only the objects which belong to the realm of nature.

But we may know the character of our invisible associates, by carefully attending to the motives which we allow to govern us in our ordinary daily intercourse with others—to our ruling purpose, our ends and aim in life. If these are selfish, base, and grovelling, such is the character of our associate spirits ; but if unselfish and righteous, so are our invisible companions ;—we walk in company with angels and inhale their inspiring breath, while we tabernacle in the flesh.

“ Angels and spirits are continually associated with man—angels from heaven and spirits from hell. . . . He cannot see them except by the eye of his internal man which, for several reasons, is not opened in him during his abode in this world.” (A. C. 5848, '9.)

“ The character of the spirits associated with a man, is according to the man's own character. If he is covetous, the spirits are covetous ; if haughty, the spirits are haughty ; if desirous of revenge, so are the spirits ; if deceitful, the spirits are of like character. An [evil] man attaches to himself spirits from hell according to his life.” (A. C. 5851.)

“ The angels flow into the ends which a man regards, and so, through the ends, into the things which follow from them. This influx is tacit and imperceptible to men, but still operative in a hidden manner, and effective principally in turning from evil ends and insinuating good ones ; . . . for the angels cannot be present in evil ends, that is, in the loves of self and the world, except remotely.” (A. C. n. 5854.)

“ Man regards as an end what belongs to his life or love. When the good of his neighbor, the general good, the good of the church and of the Lord's kingdom, is the end regarded, then man, as to his soul, is in the Lord's kingdom ; for his kingdom is none other than a kingdom of ends and uses respecting the good of the human race. The angels attendant on man, have their abode solely in his ends of life. So far as a man has respect to an end of the same kind that influences the Lord's kingdom, the angels are delighted with him, and join themselves to him as a brother ; but so far as he is influenced by selfish ends, the angels recede, and evil spirits from hell draw near—for only selfish ends rule in hell. Hence we may see the importance of searching and knowing the origin of our affections, which can only be known from the end at which we aim.” (A. C. 3796.)

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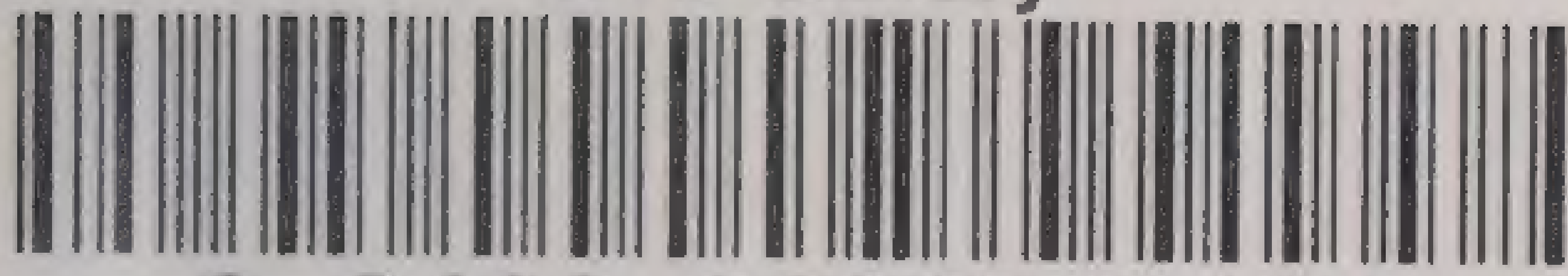
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